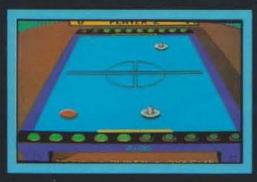
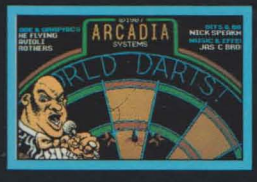
CANADIAN CoinBox MAGAZINE

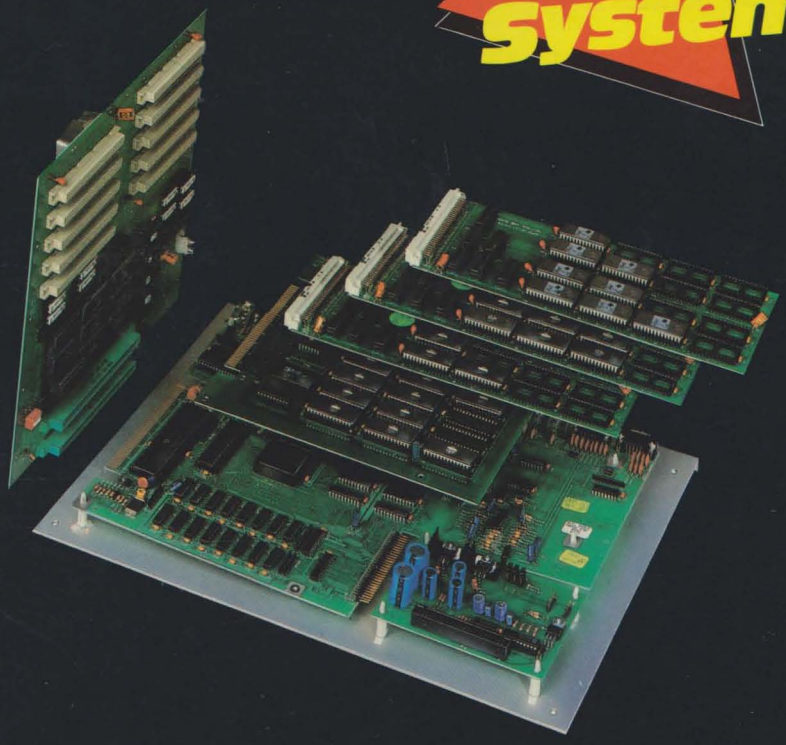
NEWS FOR THE COIN OPERATED ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Apr-May/89





Super Select System



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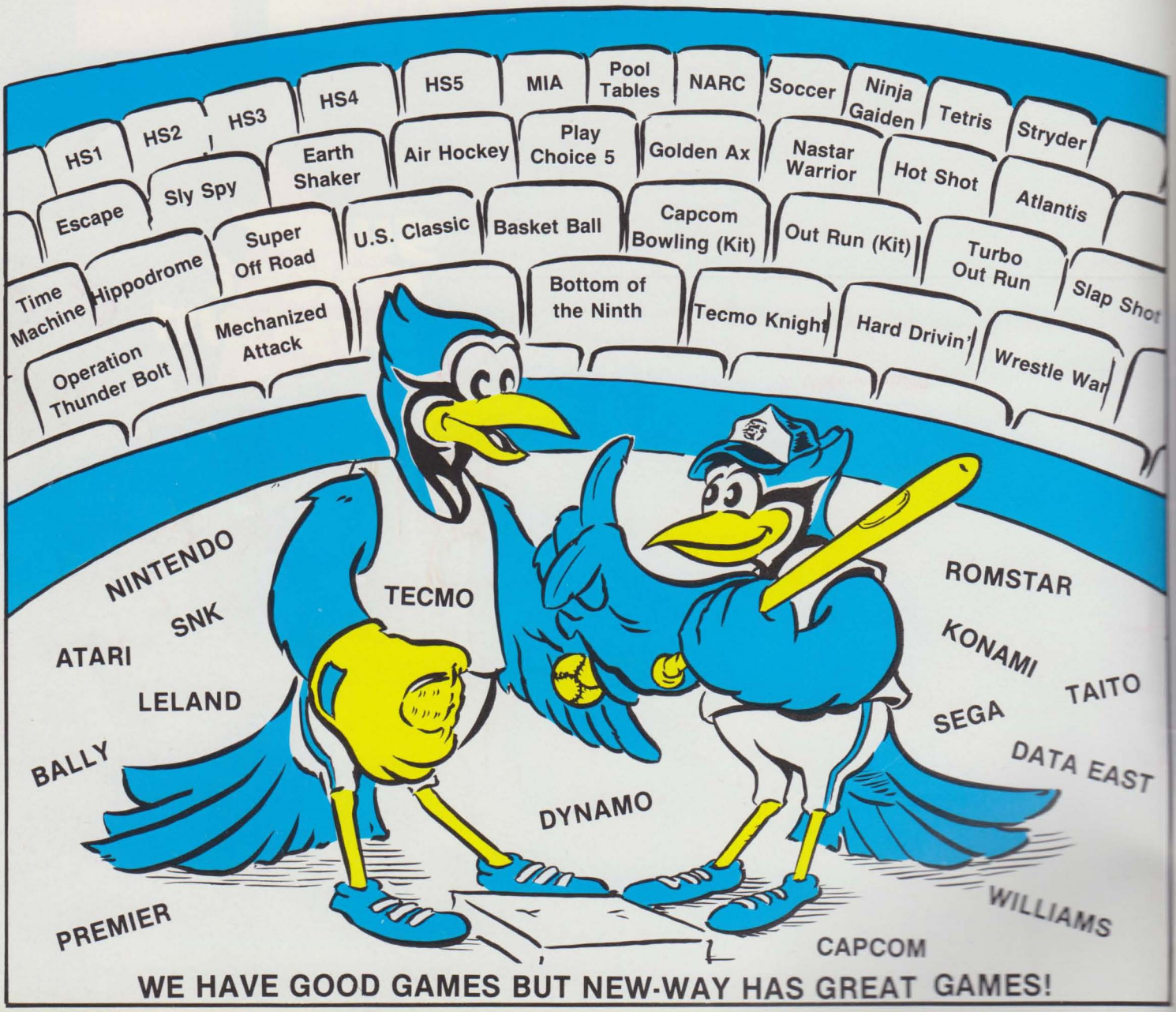

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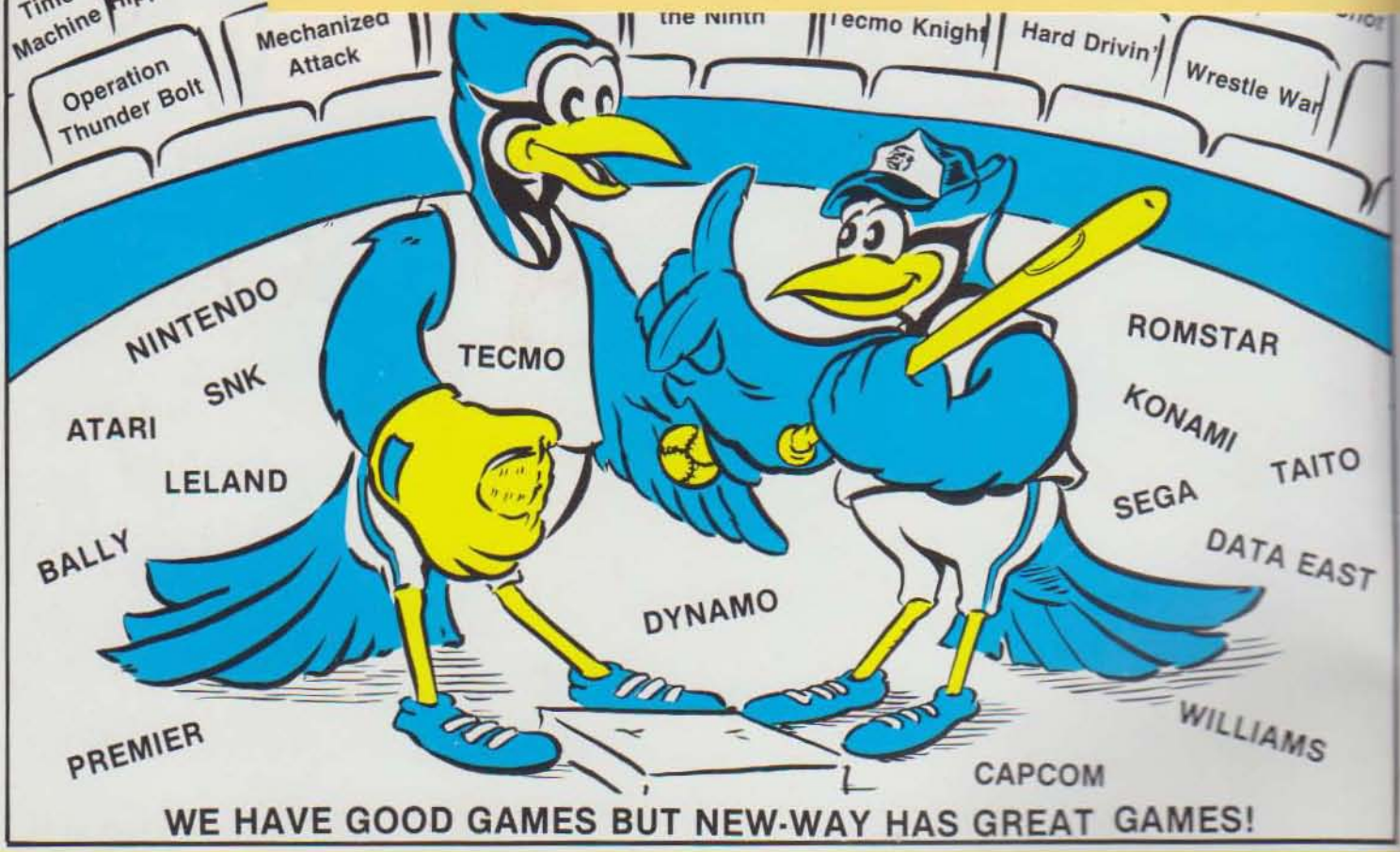

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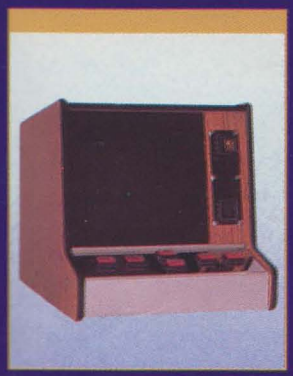

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Published Since 1946

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May 1989

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Lenny Keywood's Starburst Coin Machines of Toronto is keeping up with the ever-changing times in the coin-op business.

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A look at what was new and exciting at this year's ACME '89. Videos, Pins, Jukeboxes and more are covered in this extensive review. Plus... many photos of participants and exhibits!

41 Music
A new monthly column! Joe Pankus enlightens us on aspects of Marketing The New Jukebox. Joe's enthusiastic approach to analysis makes for interesting reading.

46 Technical Corner
More from the pages of StarTech Journal. This month we bring you details of how to perform a color modification on Atari's Star Wars videos.

48 Pacific Vend Distributor's Grand Opening
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VALLEY

PERSPECTIVES

by Ed Zapletal

ACME '89 — Seminars Offer Good Industry Education.

The post-show dust is settling now and it appears as though ACME '89 was a huge success. As I mentioned in my last column, the show was going to be my first real exposure to the coin-op industry, and I certainly was awe-struck by the size of the whole production.

Touring the aisles of the show gave me an opportunity to meet and talk with a variety of manufacturers, distributors and operators about the state of the industry. And what I discovered for the most part was a positive attitude toward the coin amusement industry, but there were some concerns voiced by some operators.

Foremost of those concerns was the high cost and fast depreciation of some of the newer video games coming on to the scene. It would seem that operators are caught in a rather tight situation with having to lay out large sums of money for machines that may only have a short payback life. Manufacturers, on the other hand, are becoming more sensitive to this and are releasing more kit-type games on to the market, making it easier for the operator to upgrade just the software rather than the whole cabinet etc.

The seminars at ACME '89 are probably the best way to get filled in on particular aspects of the industry. Jukeboxes, for instance, were discussed at length with respect to issues such as "the future of the 45 rpm record," "CD albums vs. CD singles," "cassette singles" and even Digital Audio Tape. DAT is said to be poised at making a run at the CD market, but some industry experts say that it is too complex mechanically to be viable in jukeboxes.

The dollar coin issue is heating up south of the border, and back here at home as well. As far as the attendance at this particular seminar, there doesn't seem to be much support coming from within the industry itself to promote the obvious advantages to the proposed American "Columbus" dollar coin. Public response to the new currency is lax at best, but if dollar coins are to be successful, both here and in the U.S., the industry will have to collectively get fired up over this one.

In Canada, the dollar coin issue will become somewhat clearer after the mint ceases to produce the dollar bill at the beginning of this summer. Once this happens, we will hopefully see more of the "Loony" coins in circulation instead of in people's cookie jars.

Other popular seminars at ACME '89 included those which covered such topics as Profit Analysis, Equipment Budgeting, Equipment Clinics, Monitors, Conversions.

All in all, the event provided attendees with a good selection of exhibits and activities. The key here is that all of this is provided to help those in the industry become better educated, and as a result, more successful. □

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Pop-A-Shot BasketBall Championships

Pop-A-Shot Canada has announced that they will be holding their $10,000 Ontario Provincial Championships at the Toronto Skyline Airport Inn June 2 - 4, 1989.

Players in the Championships will be chosen from the ten week-long qualifying tournament, currently ongoing at bars and taverns around the province.

The tournaments are designed to bring people into the establishment on a weekly basis, as well as to give them incentive to come back to their favorite bar to practice during the week. This of course should translate to more food and drink sold by the tavern owners, as well as bringing consistently high earnings in the coin box.

Pop-A-Shot's next big money promotion is their $25,000 Canadian National Championships; this will be covered by The Sports Network. For more information and details on this event contact: Gregg Perrie, Pop-A-Shot Canada (416) 858-7954.

Banco's Good Reputation Gets Them Arcadia Systems Exclusive Distributorship In Canada

Banco Canada Inc. has gained the exclusive rights to distribute Arcadia Systems products in Canada, according to Arcadia VP Rachel Davies.

According to Ms. Davies, "we wanted a "hungry" distributor in Canada, but one with a good reputation in the business, and give them the exclusive rights to distribute our product."

Continued on page 13

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PEOPLE

Our deepest and most heartfelt sympathies go out to **Valerie Cognevich**, editor of Play Meter Magazine, and her husband Russel, on hearing of the loss of their daughter **Kim** on March 27, 1989. Kim's death was due to injuries sustained in a car accident on March 8 in Lubbock, Texas. No words can ease the sorrow and grief, but the thoughts and prayers of the entire coin amusement industry are with Valerie and her family during this difficult time.

Data East USA, Inc., San Jose, California recently announced the appointment of **Louis Rudolph** to the position of International Sales Manager. He will be responsible for sales and technical service of the Data East Pinball product line in the international marketplace. In his new position, Louis will be reporting to Jeff Walker, Vice President of International Sales. Louis will be based in West Germany and will be travelling primarily throughout the European Continent.

Mr. Rudolph was formerly the Electronics Manager for Data East Pinball, Inc. in Melrose Park, Illinois. Before coming to Data East he worked for Stern Electronics., Inc., Bally's Aladdins Castle and Empire Distributing. Mr. Walker said "Lou will be a great asset to our company, serving as the eyes and ears to an important foreign market for Data East, USA."

David Rubinstein has been named National Sales Manager of **Merit Industries**, Inc., Bensalem, Pa, according to Mort Ansky, Vice President of Sales. David has been a salesman for the past six years with the Pennsylvania-based manufacturer. Ansky commented, "David's promotion reflects the tremendous contributions he has made to the company. We recognize his efforts and expect even greater success. David's new position involves responsibility for sales policy, strategies and programs as new Merit products are developed and marketed."

Joining Merit in early 1983, David was instrumental in helping the development of the firms national distributor network. The firm noted that along with a significant role in upholding the reputation for ethics and integrity that the company enjoys, he is also widely recognized across the country for his efforts within statewide associations.

Michael Pace, President of **U.S. Games**, has announced the addition of industry veteran **Paul Moriarity** to the U.S. Games management team. Moriarity is overseeing the company's administrative and financial operations.

"We are excited to have an individual of Paul's extensive industry background to help guide us through the period of tremendous growth we are currently experiencing," Pace noted.

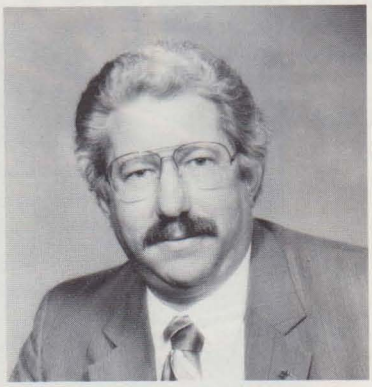
Moriarity opened the U.S. Taito office in Chicago in 1973 and was named President of Taito America 1983. In 1987, he left Taito to pursue opportunities in international trade and licensing, serving as a consultant and liaison to such corporations as General Mills and Caesar's World.

Other recent appointments at U.S. Games include: Dickie Hanner, to directing the U.S. Games inside sales effort; and Mike Horan as Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

A well known and loved member of the pool and bowling industries passed away on March 10th, 1989 following several months of ill health. **Warren Kelly** was a consultant to Valley Recreation Products and was deeply involved in the formation and continuing success of the V.N.E.A pool league and many other nationally run industry events. Warren was an executive of the Brunswick Bowling Centre Division for many years and is still remembered in the industry and among bowlers in North America and overseas.

"His contribution to the industry and the sport of pool over the years, his dedication to the interests of players, especially in the V.N.E.A. league, continued right up to the end and we at Valley will miss him and his vitality and knowledge of the sport," said Chuck Milhem, president of Valley Recreation. "Our sympathy and condolences go out to Warren's wife together with those received from players and members of other industry organizations," he added.

Williams Electronics Games, Inc., is pleased to announce the appointment of **Linda Schooley** to the position of Manager Customer Service-Part Sales. Formerly Business Manager of Bloomingdale's in New York, Linda is actually a veteran of the coin-op industry an brings a unique expertise to her new duties. For six years at Wico



Corp., she was in charge of nationwide branch operations, which included six distribution centers, as well as the hiring, training and supervision of all branch managers and personnel.

In another announcement, **Tom Cahill** has been named to the post of Technical Field Supports Manager for both Williams and Bally/Midway. A familiar fact to many in the industry, Tom was originally a Component Engineer and Engineering Technical Support Director when he began at Williams in 1978. Directing the efforts of Field Service, Parts Sales and Technical Publications, Tom is a member of the AMOA Standardization Committee, recipient of the Accent on Achievement Award for Support and Operations and a regular participant in AMOA and State Association Educational Seminars. □

Send submissions to this column to: The Editor, Can. Coin Box, 106 Lakeshore Rd. E., Port Credit, Ontario L5G 1E3.

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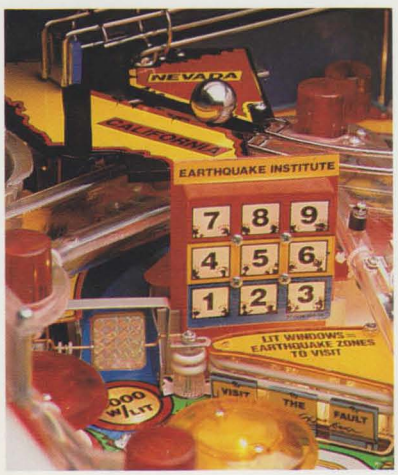

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Continued from page 8

Arcadia's has taken an "open-minded" approach to marketing their products here in that they are willing to tailor their products for the what the market is demanding. Interviewed at ACME, Banco's Daniel Simard said: "We are very happy with the arrangement with Arcadia. We like their excellent variety of games and kits, and especially like the flexibility of their Super Select System. They also listen to what we have to say about products, whether it is good, or not so good. Our game site testing allows us to determine if the product is suitable for a particular market, and if it isn't, Arcadia has been very good about helping us find the right product."

Arcadia's decision to go with Banco was helped in part by the fact that Banco is an established firm with a solid background in the parts business. According to Davies, "it made good sense to us set up a distributorship with a company that was parts-oriented so that service could be handled quickly and efficiently."

Arcadia Systems set up in the United States in 1988 as a software developer and originator of games. Their Super Select System features games such as Magic Johnson's Fast Break and Leaderboard Golf, World Trophy Soccer, Pool, Sidewinder, Ninja Mission, Roadways, and Space Ranger to name a few. The company is the coin-op division of British parent company, Virgin Corporation, whose holdings include airlines, retail and entertainment.

Banco Canada Inc. is located at 601 McCaffery, St-Laurent, Quebec H4T 1N3. They can be reached at (514) 343-4883 or by fax at (514) 342-2266. Their WATS line number is 1-800-363-2661 for area codes 416, 418, 506, 519, 613, 705, 819, and 902. The other WATS line number is 1-800-363-2384 for area codes 204, 306, 403, 604, 709, and 807.

Manitoba Opening Year-Round Casino

The first casino on Canadian soil to be opened year-round will begin operation this fall in Winnipeg's Hotel Fort Garry.

The Manitoba government hopes that revenues from the casino, projected to be $10 million per year, will go to help fund the province's health care system. It is scheduled to open in October, on the seventh floor of the Hotel Fort Garry. Hours of operation will be 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. during the week, and 12 noon to 2 a.m. on Saturdays.

New Address For Intermark Amusements

Intermark Amusements, Inc. has announced that they have moved to new quarters at 1711 West Rose Garden Lane, Suite 4, Phoenix, Arizona 85027. Their new phone number is (602) 780-0112 and the FAX is (602) 780-0331. They were formerly located in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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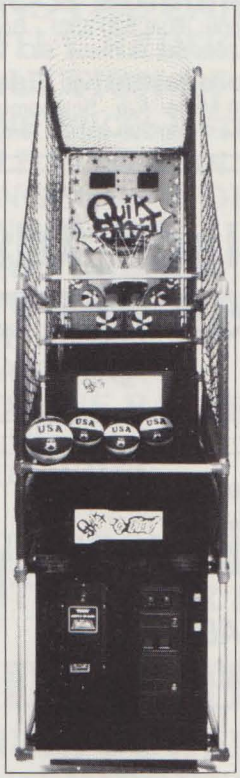

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System at the British Coin Machine Industry Awards held at the successful ATEI show in London.

On hand to accept the award was Mr. Alan Stone, Vice President Sales and Marketing for Nintendo America, Inc. In accepting the award, Stone commented, "It gives me great pleasure to receive this award on behalf of Nintendo and all those who have worked hard to make the Playchoice 10 the operator's system of choice. The award is especially meaningful because it represents a vote of confidence and support from the backbone of our industry - the operator - who voted to select Nintendo as top manufacturer of the year. This distinction is a great honor and I thank them for it."

Generous Canadian Helps British Sick Kids

Sylvia Gunther, wife of Joseph Gunther from Toronto, turned out to be the most generous contributor to a charity benefitting from the annual Ball of the British Amusement Catering Trades Association in London recently. Sylvia was a guest of Coinmaster Manufacturing, the coin machine company for which her husband is the Canadian distributor.

The profits from the Ball were to go to a Manchester hospital specializing in the treatment of sick children and the donations made by pledges from the guests in the evening totalled £60,000. The grand prize as an Austin Metro automobile and Sylvia's ticket came out of the drum.

A mother of three herself, Sylvia considered the sick children's needs rated a higher priority and promptly donated the car to the charity. Coinmaster took the car back to their headquarters in Cardiff, Wales, and later sold it to make another £4,500 for the hospital.

Laniel Automatic Does It "One More Time"

According to Jean Coutu of Laniel Automatic of Montreal, Quebec "we're having a great deal of success with Wurlitzer's One More Time jukebox." Laniel is one of Canada's oldest and most respected coin machine companies.

With this being the 100th anniversary of the jukebox, it's no wonder that spirits are high in this part of the coin-op amusement industry. Jukeboxes are considered by many to be steady

Continued on page 18

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Starburst Coin Machines: Cabinets And Auctions Contribute To The Ongoing Success Of This West Toronto Company

Len Keywood knows the realities of the coin-op amusement business. He knows that it takes a lot of hard work and effort to make it a success, and he also knows that you have to stay informed about everything that's going on. We recently had an opportunity to visit with Len at his location in West Toronto and chat with him about Starburst and, about the industry: how it's doing, what can be done to make it better, and what's in store for the future.

Cabinets And Auctions Doing Well

A big part of Starburst Coin Machines' business is done with Dynamo cabinets, and according to Keywood, "...are good value for the money... they lower the risk factor and help to improve the bottom line."

Len Keywood best described his place in the coin amusement business: "I see myself as a stockbroker of amusement machines." This is as a result of his frequent coin machine auctions he holds at his Kipling Avenue premises.

Although he claims that his almost-monthly auctions aren't a big part of the business, it is a part which he feels is important because of the service it performs for operators. "Actually, the auctions are a rather costly operation, but operators benefit because there are some good deals on used machines." Keywood's auctions are held every four to five weeks with 150 to 250 machines going up on the block for bidding. And he gets a good crowd out too. There's usually 100 to 200 people turning out at the Saturday events.

All the machines put up for auction are available for inspection during the previous day and also on the day of the auction itself.

Keywood claims the auction gives some of the smaller operators, espe-

Starburst's Len Keywood — considers himself "a stockboker of amusement machines."

cially those with routes in outlying areas, a chance to pick up some "not bad" equipment that can still make them some good money. He also believes that to be successful in this business, operators have to be shrewd investors - on the lookout for good equipment buys.

He adds that: "...there are operators out there who have invested heavily in many new dedicated machines. As a result, these machines which cost them a lot of dollars up front, may not be giving the return on investment that is necessary to pay the costs of the business. These guys end being machine-rich, and cash-poor." In some cases, the auction is the place where many of these machines end up being sold. And no, not necessarily at an unfairly low price either. Keywood believes that many of the machines go at what the marketplace deems a fair price.

Route Of Over 1,000 Coin Machines

Starburst's route of coin amusement machines is currently numbered at somewhere over a thousand units. "Games that are popular now include: Leland's Super Off-Road; Williams' "Narc" and Jokerz!; and Data East's Robo Cop," says Keywood.

As for pinballs, Keywood adds that they do well for him but, "...they're cash and labor intensive."

The State Of The Industry

One of the major concerns of operators today is the high depreciation on video games. With such a short

Continued on page 52

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Industry News from page 14

earners if programmed and maintained properly. The recent ACME show in Reno provided ample proof of this as the jukebox industry showed up in full force. Music machines of all shapes and sizes graced the floor. Most machines sported CD player mechanisms while there were still some CD/45 combo and dedicated 45 rpm units available.

Dynamo 1989 Air Hockey Open

Fun 'N Games in Loveland, Colorado was the site for the First Annual Northern Colorado Air Hockey Open, held on February 18th. The tournament awarded $1400 in cash and prizes, drawing players from the Denver-Boulder area, Northern Colorado, and Southern Wyoming. Sponsors included Fun 'N Games, Dynamo Corp., and a number of local businesses.

Bob Dubuisson of Boulder, a four-time national champion, captured first place in the event. Second went to Steve Hartley of Loveland, co-owner of Fun 'N Games. Mike Mosiniak of Wheat Ridge took 3rd place; 4th went to Doug Kohler of Boulder; and 5th went to Lorraine Morrison of Boulder.

Williams Bonus Bucks Promotion For "Narc"

Due to the fantastic response "Narc" has received, Williams has announced a promotional program that is the company's way of saying thank you for helping make its return to the video game marketplace so successful.

For every "Narc" video game operators purchase from their local authorized Williams distributor before May 10, 1989, they'll find a special $100 Bonus Buck affixed to the game screen. And this Bonus Buck can be cased in at any time before June 30, 1989 with the purchase of any new Williams Electronics pinball machine(s), shuffle alley(s), or video game(s) from an authorized Williams distributor.

Commenting on this exciting offer, Marty Glazman, Vice President of Marketing and Sales, stated that "we've created Bonus Bucks with maximum flexibility in mind for each and every operator. They can use the Bonus Bucks they receive on the purchase of a new "Narc" video game, one at a time, or accumulate their certificates for even greater future savings on any new Williams equipment."

For more information on Bonus Bucks, contact your local authorized Williams distributor, or Williams Electronics Games, Inc. at (312) 267-2240.

Arachnid $125,000 Tournament

Arachnid Inc.'s $125,000 Mark Dart Bullshooter IV World of Champions tour is making its final qualifying stops. The tournament is sponsored by Arachnid, manufacturer of English Mark Darts, and its monthly publication, the Bullshooter.

Qualifying rounds have been held around the U.S. in various cities. Some of the events include: 301 Womens Doubles, 301 Open Doubles, Cricket Singles, and 701 Mixed Doubles; there are eight qualifying events in all.

First, second, and third place winners in each of the eight main events will qualify for entry to the Bullshooter IV Finals in May.

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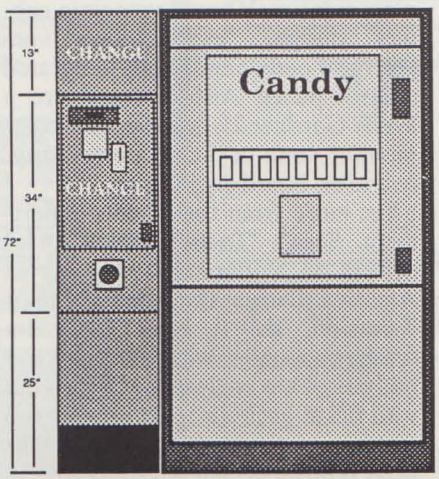

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Reno Plays Host To Bigger And Better ACME '89 — Kits, Videos And Pins Get Lots Of Attention.

This year's ACME provided lots of action on and off the exhibit floor for prospective buyers of coin amusement equipment of all kinds.

I just got the ringing of the slot machines out of my ears, and the bleeriness out of my eyes from travelling half way around the continent when I sat down to put this together. As this was my first trip to an ACME function, I'm not particularly in a good position to judge it against other shows in the past. However, I can say that, according to operators and manufacturers who I spoke to out on the floor, the attitude toward the industry was very positive. In addition to this, the post-show figures revealed that attendance and booth space was up slightly from 1988.

Auto Motives

Without a doubt, you could definitely use a car to get around Bally's Reno — it's that big. With this in mind, it was nice to see more driving, or driving simulator-type games around the floor. And **Atari** had the right idea with their **"Hard Drivin'"** driving simulator. You couldn't take it from the casino to the Ziegfeld theatre, but it sure gives the impression of driving a real automobile. This one was definitely a crowd pleaser, with many people lined up to take a turn on one of the many units displayed. The game has great 3-D-like graphics with a positive feedback steering system controlled by the software. There is also an adjustable swivel seat, gas, break and clutch pedals, four-speed stick shift and a 25-inch medium resolution monitor. (We featured a more complete write-up of the game in our New Products section of the Feb/Mar '89 pre-show issue.)

Leland's "Super Off-Road" was another big attention-getter. This is a fun game that pits up to three drivers against each other in a mud-boggin' battle. The play is based on any of eight different race courses in 16 configurations; each course comes littered with its share of hair-raising obstacles too. The object of the game is to complete a given number of laps while collecting cash awards along the way. These cash awards can then be used to purchase shocks, tires, supercharged engines and nitro packs from Ironman Stewart's Speedshop.

The game itself features a high-displacement cash box, ergonomic cabinet design, "hammerdown" accelerator pedals and a fully integrated control panel. Also featured are a Wells-Gardner 25-inch diagonal color monitor, state-of-the-art power supply, and on-board diagnostics.

Yet more from the wheels department. **Sega's "Turbo Outrun"** takes drivers on a four-stage race across America. During the course of their excursion, they'll have fender-to-fender encounters with both good and bad guys, blow engines, and fight it out with fickle girlfriends. This game too features sixteen scenes which take players through congested city streets, over icy mountain passes and across sun-baked deserts. Engine gauges are displayed on-screen, and upon successful completion of each stage, players may select performance options such as High Performance Engine, High-Grip Tires, or Extra-Boost Turbo Charger.

Turbo Outrun comes in both an upright and cockpit version. Both feature a 20-inch color monitor, continuous play, operator-adjustable skill levels, front door access to service panel.

Videos Aplenty

Arcadia Systems was proudly showing off its **Super Select System Starter Kits**. The Super Select System (featured on our cover this month) is an easy to install video multi game system. It offers the flexibility of adding up to 10 different games in one cabinet, with each game on a unique Megaboard plug in cartridge. Each game has a megabyte (one million bytes) of memory that allows for processing of brilliant graphics and stunning stereo sound. Games available for the Super Select System range from sports games such as Magic Johnson's Fast Break Basketball and Soccer, to fast-action shoot 'em ups and Ninja fighting games. A variety of tastes can be accommodated in one cabinet.

The starter kit comes with just one game: a choice of either Magic Johnson's Fast Break or Leader Board

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ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

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Golf. The kit includes PC Board set; metal electronics chassis and card cage guide; marquee of single game and Super Select System; manual; cabinet graphics; joysticks and buttons. Other features include JAMMA Interface and standard 11 amp power supply.

Atari's **Tetris** kit, a game originally developed in the Soviet Union, was also featured at the show. Tetris is a kind of moving puzzle game that has players fitting blocks together to complete vertical columns. It's not as easy as it sounds. Although Tetris is new to the Amusement industry, it has been floating around the personal computer scene for almost a year now.

Jaleco introduced their **St. Dragon**, a new outerspace shoot 'em up kit-type game for their Lo-Pro horizontal game cabinet. The game pits players against an alien menace that threatens the galaxy. Planet after planet falls, leaving worlds populated only by deadly mechanical monsters. It appears as though Earth is next in line for decimation, except, the nations of the world have banded together and created the ultimate robotic defender – St. Dragon. You mission, if you decide to except it, is to guide St. Dragon through an onslaught of lasers, missiles, and other projectiles fired by the mechanical menaces that oppose him.

The game is one or two-player unit with a continuation feature to encourage repeat play. There are six increasingly more complex levels of play, and vendors can choose from four different difficulty settings. The 48-inch high cabinet features a 19-inch Wells-Gardiner universal monitor, that quickly converts from horizontal to vertical play by simply removing four easily-accessible bolts. Also standard are JAMMA cables and connectors, and a universal control harness fits any 1, 2, or 3 button game that uses 1 or 2 joysticks. All conversions are made through the front of the unit, with no need for removal of the backpanels. Two blank panels are included for 1 or 2 joystick controls.

SNK had two major offerings for showgoers: **Ikari III: The Rescue, and Mechanized Attack**. Ikari III is a hostage rescue-type game where the player must overcome several perils to rescue a presidential candidate's daughter. Mechanized Attack is two-player shooter that has seemingly realistic Uzi machine guns and grenade launchers. The game has excellent 3-D graphics displayed on a 25-inch monitor. A sliding drawer allows easy access to electronic components.

Sega's offerings in the non-driving video category included **Wrestle War** and **Gain Ground** kits. Wrestle War is a realistic wrestling game that consists of 3-D characters fighting in an arena-type setting. Various techniques and actions are fully displayed in, and out, of the ring. By defeating all eight opponents, the winner is entitled to wear the Championship Belt. The kit features bold cabinet graphics, circuit board, JAMMA interface harness, twin joystick/button controls, and a separate service panel offering the operator the accessibility to volume control, bookkeeping and test func-

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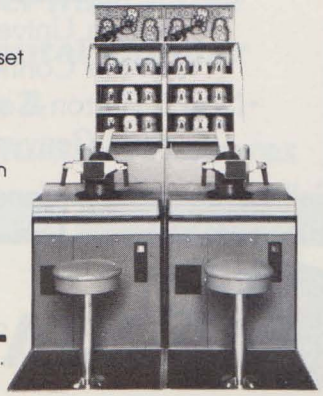

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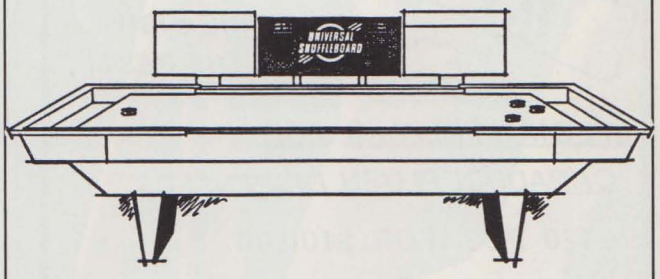

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ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

tions from the front service door.

Gain Ground is a dramatic war action game that takes place in the battlefields of the past and the future. It's based on a story of a battle simulation system controlled by a supercomputer that was developed for the purpose of training the fighting instinct of man. As you might have guessed, the supercomputer goes bonkers and starts taking citizens hostage. Lots of action in this one!

The folks at **SunSoft** had three kit offerings and these included: **Tough Turf, Bay Route,** and **VS. Platoon.**

Tough Turf uses the powerful 16-B hardware system that includes 2-player simultaneous play, a buy feature (add-a-coin), eight extensive challenging levels and excellent graphics.

Bay Route is a frighteningly real portrayal of post-armageddon destruction and devastation. The game is a two-player interactive type with a buy-in and continuation feature.

The VS. Platoon game is a conversion kit for any VS. Dual or UniSystem. Players fight their way through jungles, bunkers etc in an effort to do away with the "unseen" enemy. The game is based on the Academy Award winning movie *Platoon*.

Romstar's new kit games at the show included **Downtown** and **Bloody Wolf.** Downtown is a vertical that features a street-fighting theme with characters such as less-than-reputable cops and a variety of other street and gutter low-life. One of the highlights of this game is a fire-breathing wino who stumbles in and out view every once and a while.

Bloody Wolf is POW rescue game that comes in a horizontal kit form or a horizontal dedicated model.

Exidy was showing a variation of their Showdown video poker game that pits four players against each other in an Old West-style card game. **Yukon** is similar to Showdown in most respects except that it is also equipped with a ticket dispenser. Tickets may then be exchanged for plush toys. (You may want to check with your local authorities on this one regarding redemption-type games.)

After taking top honors in the "Top Manufacturer of the Year" category at the ATEI show in London, England, **Nintendo** came fully prepared for the ACME show with a complete selection of units for the **PlayChoice-10 Upright, PlayChoice, PlayChoice CounterTop, PlayChoice Kit** for the VS. Unisystem, and the **PlayChoice Kit.** Some 30 titles are now available for the PlayChoice System. A big attention-getter at the show was the new Super Mario Bros. 2 game.

Nintendo also announced, that in mid-April they will be making available the PlayChoice Kit for VS. Dual and VS. Table, and a New PlayChoice Kit to convert the main side of VS. Dual or VS. Table to the PlayChoice System. These will be available with 5 or 10 games.

Offerings from **Taito** at this year's show included their **Operation Thunderbolt,** a hijack rescue game, **Superman,** and **U.S. Classic** kits. U.S. Classic is a golf game that is available as a dedicated upright, a cocktail, or a

Continued on page 27

ANOTHER GRAND SLAM KIT

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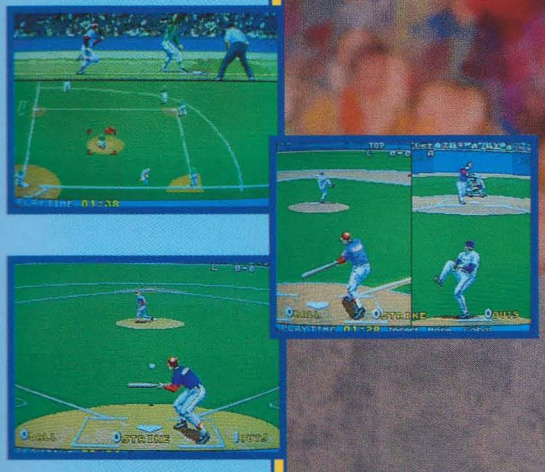

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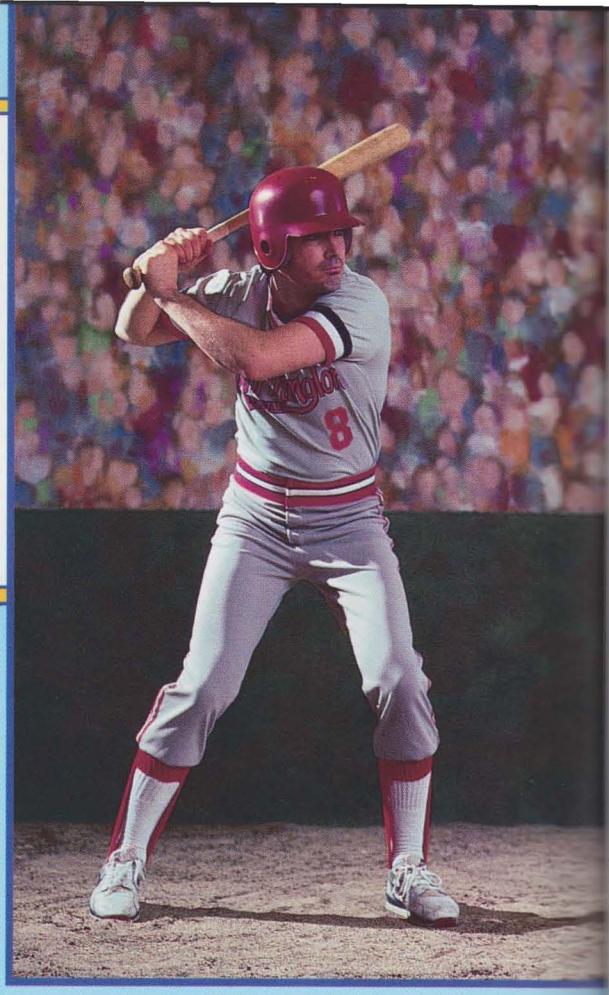

1) Kit
2) 2 Player Interactive
3) Horizontal Monitor
4) Buy-in & Continuation Features
5) Each Player's Controls Are:
- **1 8-way Joystick**
- **2 Buttons**

Description:

Batter up! Loosen up in the bullpen, take a few practice swings, and warm up for Major League action in Konami's latest winner, **Bottom of the Ninth.**

The player can choose his team from among the following cities:

- **Chicago**
- **Los Angeles**
- **Atlanta**
- **New York**
- **Boston**
- **Houston**

The player's controls offer a wide variety of play options and enable him to perform like an actual baseball pro. When pitching, he can adjust his aim to the catcher and select which type of pitch he wants to throw—fast ball, screw ball, curve ball, sinker, fork ball, knuckle ball, slider or change up. When batting, he can adjust his position in the batter's box and the angle of the swing—or he can bunt! When he is fielding, he can select where he wants to make the play. As a special option, the fielder can run to a base to make a play, or run down a baserunner.

The baseball action is enhanced by the realistic plays and special effects. In the 2-player mode the split screen allows each player to see what is happening from the batter's and pitcher's standpoints. The split screen shows different perspectives on each play, even occasionally panning to the dugout, where players can see the coach's reaction to different plays. These features and many more, such as zoom shots of close plays, make **Bottom of the Ninth** the most realistic and exciting baseball game yet!

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ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 24

kit. Play features include 9 or 18 capability and the player has a complete set of woods and irons. Realism is not compromised here either, there are water hazards, sand traps, etc. to keep players on their toes.

Also at the show was Taito's **Top Shooter**, a target-practice game that allows the shooter to aim at a target card in five different positions. After all rounds have been released, the card is returned to the player.

Capcom's first showing of their **Strider** video was also the first showing of a CPS kit system to fit any cabinet. Strider is a Ninja fighting game that takes place in the year 2048. The Ninja warrior battles his way from the rooftops of Moscow through the jungles of the Amazon, to the skies over the planet Earth. This game features Capcom's Computer-Aided Difficulty Adjustment, which automatically adjusts to each player's skill level.

New at ACME for **Konami** were **Missing In Action** and **Bottom Of The Ninth.** Both of these videos are available in kit form for a horizontal monitor, and both are two-player interactive types that have buy-in and continuation features. MIA is a action fighting game with the object being to free prisoners of war held in a jungle POW camp.

Bottom Of The Ninth, as its name implies, is a baseball two-player interactive video that allows players to chose from teams from six major-league cities (...but not Toronto, sigh). Special effects and realistic plays enhance the action, while a split-screen allows each player to see what is happening from the batter's and pitcher's viewpoints. The split-screen also shows different perspectives on each play, pans the dugout to allow players to see coaches reaction etc.

Konami also had their Thunder Cross and Final Round videos on display, but these were previously shown at AMOA '88 in Chicago.

Data East was showing their latest available videos, **RoboCop** and **Apache 3**, and one soon-to-be-released – **Hippodrome.** (Actually, as we were preparing this issue, Hippodrome was officially released on April 6, 1989.)

RoboCop was borne out of the hit movie that grossed over $90 million at the box office. According to Data East, after three months on the market, the game continues to do well. It is now available as a kit.

Apache 3 is a dedicated upright that features real life combat action, along with superb 3-D graphics. DE claims that "the player can truly experience the feeling of fighting through enemy military installations, and skilful maneuvering to rescue captured comrades."

Hippodrome is a horizontal kit that offers fast action and creative game playing strategy set in the ancient time of gladiators and chariots. Players are challenged to fight the planet's mightiest warriors in a duel to the death that forces them to display power and skill.

Tecmo was on hand to show their latest – **Tecmo Knight**, a quick action game whose object is to fight off characters such as Snake Lady, Bulldog Man and Turtle Man in an effort to re-take a castle. The game features excellent 3-D graphics and is one or two-player interactive with an 8-position joystick.

Fabtek was sneak-previewing their yet-to-be-completed **Dynamite Duke** action game. Only a portion of the game was complete at ACME time so Fabtek officials decided to cloak the machine in secrecy keeping it in their hospitality suite for limited viewing. The machine's release date is scheduled for later in the Spring though, possibly in April or May. Fabtek did display their **Cabal** twin trackball video kit however, but this was previously shown at AMOA '88.

Another in the sneak-preview category included **Bally/Midway's The Legend of Tonma.** This fantasy-type game is actually being licensed from IREM Corp. Object of the game is to get Tonma safely through a series of perils that include caves, stone walls, forests, cliffs etc.

Nichibutsu USA's Atomic Robo-Kid is an action video that features twenty levels of play to keep customers coming back. The game is a horizontal kit and it's licensed from UFL.

In the cabinet department, **Dynamo** certainly offers operators the best selection of equipment. Their **HS-6 cocktail series** comes in rectangular top model, a round top and pedestal base model, and a square top model. Monitors for these units are Wells-Gardiner 19-inch types that can be mounted either vertically or horizontally. The all-plywood cabinets feature a modular design and JAMMA wiring harnesses.

A interesting approach to cabinet design was unveiled by **Plateau Inc.** with their new **Angle System.** The Angle System consists of a 19 or 25-inch monitor in a formica cabinet. The neat thing about this system is the quick-release device used in the design

ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

Williams' Barry Oursler (R) and Bill Pfutzenreuter.

Randy Brandstrom (L), Abe Pauls (C) of GolFore and Robert Betti of Betson in front of Big Hitter.

Pictured around Valley's Quik Poke (L-R) are: Bob Corrigan, Al Schafer, Dave kristal, & Dick Shelton.

Atari's Glen Edminsten looks on as interested party takes a turn at Winning Run driving simulator.

Rowe VP Joel Friedman with Play Meter Award Of Excellence for Quality and Service. Way to go Rowe!

Bruce Reis of Tommy Gate Inc. with the company's hydraulic lift device mounted on pickup truck.

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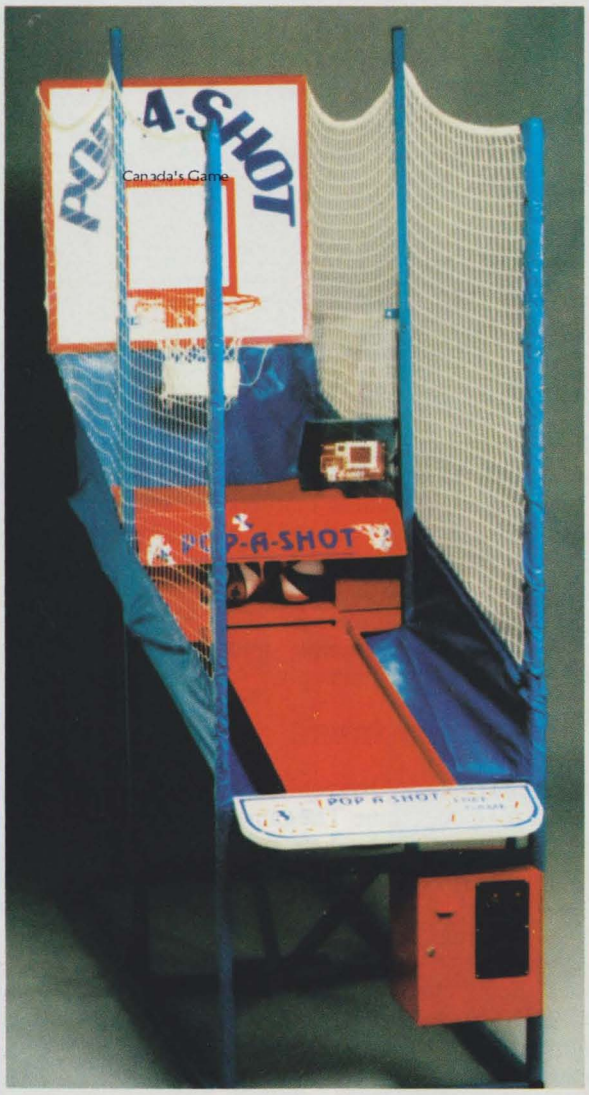

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SCORING WHERE IT COUNTS —AT THE BANK—

ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 28

of the game drawer, and the way in which the monitor can easily be withdrawn and rotated.

The **Kit Interchange Systems, or KIS** from **Amazing Games** features plastic laminated cabinets with a removable drawer system for easy interchange between both the 19 and 25-inch models. Power supplies for the units are rated at 11 amps, and monitors are Wells-Gardiner units.

Pinball Madness

Jokerz! from **Williams Electronics** a is pin with a card game theme. The game, designed by Python Anghelo and Barry Oursler, combines eye-catching graphics, original sounds, music and speech other effects.

The game features an exciting ball-shooter skill shot that awards players a whopping Wild Card of up to one million points. When Players complete top card lanes, they earn 100,000 points as well as a Table Bonus. Players can also attempt to double their score on their last shot. (See write-up in Feb/Mar '89 issue - New Products.)

Williams' better half, **Bally/Midway**, was debuting their **Atlantis** pinball game. Atlantis is guaranteed to keep players busy with "Scout" submarines that shoot them into Triple Multi-Ball play, "Escape Hatch" shots that torpedoes them to the lower playfield and back into action, and a true Multi-Ball challenge shot that can net them a potential of 4 million points. This machine was a definite hit at the show with up to three or four people deep waiting to play on the numerous machines there.

Premier Technology kept the carnival atmosphere alive with their **Hot Shots** game. This pin offers players the chance to shoot targets of Blue Elephants, Red Cuckoo Clocks, Yellow Chickens and Green Frogs. Challenging the TEDDY BEAR targets can get players an extra ball and Special.

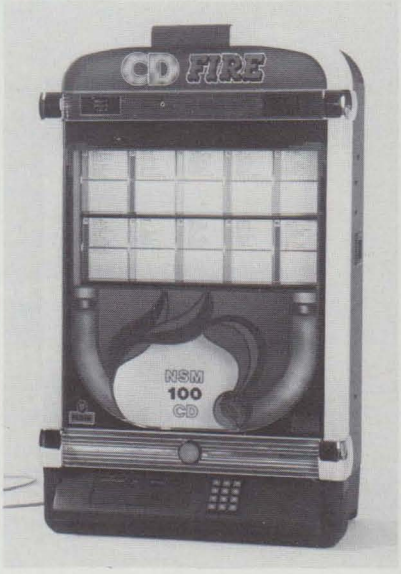
Mister Music Please

This year, and particularly this November, we are celebrating the jukebox's 100th birthday. Interesting things are happening in this neck of the amusement woods, what with the ever-growing popularity of the CD jukebox and all. A major question that has yet to be answered is: "What's going to happen to the 45 rpm record?" Certainly, its future is in doubt. Industry pundits claim that the CD single, or 3-inch CD, is virtually a dead issue, so there seems to be no threat there. But manufacturers of 45s, at least in North America, have no immediate plans to completely pull the plug on the vinyl donut. However, word has it that vinyl records will ceased to be sold in the Japanese marketplace much beyond this year.

There's no doubt though that the new technology is gaining a firm foothold here. With the domestic CD market well in place, and the consumers' growing appreciation for high-quality sound, it's almost a given that patrons of establishments with jukeboxes will be looking for that same quality when they're loading their quarters into the record machine.

As far as CD equipment at the show, there was definitely no shortage there. The jukeboxes were there in all forms, from their traditional stylings, right over to units disguised as cars, trucks and, yes, even boats.

NSM/Loewen was showing their **Galaxy** unit, a dedicated CD unit that



NSM/Loewen CD Fire

holds 100 CDs. The unit is adaptable to both albums and CD singles. Also at the show was the **Caravelle** wall-mounted unit that is used in conjunction with dedicated CD jukeboxes. Other units on display included the **Firestream** and **Fire**, a more traditionally-styled wall unit and a wall-mounted dedicated unit respectively.

The folks from **Rowe** certainly kept things hopping at their end of Aisle 1300. They had a complete display of CD jukeboxes, CD/45 combos, and dedicated 45s. Units on display and demonstrated quite effectively included: the **LaserStar**, the **Combo-Star**, and a new wall-mounted unit

Continued on page 34

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The Leland Corporation's Off Road Quiz #2

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   b) The home liposuction kit.
   c) A car that is powered entirely by beer.
   d) An exciting new video game called Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's Super Off Road.

2. **The Super Off Road cabinet is designed ...?**
   a) By NASA for deep space exploration.
   b) To withstand tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural disasters.
   c) To frighten small animals.
   d) For up to 3 players to go at it side by side in a high speed off road stadium race.

3. **The Leland Corporation's Super Off Road is making ...?**
   a) Big money at test locations.
   b) Game operators very happy.
   c) The competition very nervous.
   d) All of the above.

The correct answer to all three questions is "D". If you failed the Off Road Quiz you should contact your nearest Leland Corporation distributor and ask to see Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's Super Off Road.

Grab the wheel, stomp on the accelerator and hold on tight because you're in for some of the wildest ground-poundin', tire-bustin', hill-jumpin', teeth-rattlin' off road racing you've ever seen ... with Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's SUPER OFF ROAD from the Leland Corporation.

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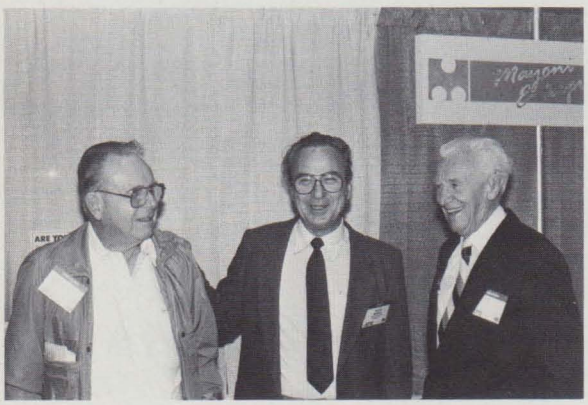
ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

David Capilato takes a turn at Tecmo Knight.

Russ Strahan of NSM/Loewen shows off the company's new 100 disc CD Fire jukebox

"Narc" designer Eugene Jarvis stands next to his pride and joy while enthusiastic players try their hand at it.

Jokerz! designers Barry Oursler (L) and Python Anghelo in front of this successful Williams pin.



Oscar Robbins (C) of Mayoni Enterprises with Glen Wolcott (L) and Clayton Ballard of Profitable Games.

Rachel Davies of Arcadia Systems and Banco Canada's Daniel Simard with Super Select System.

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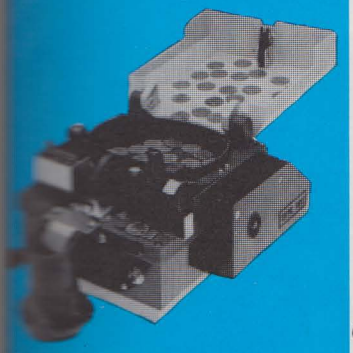

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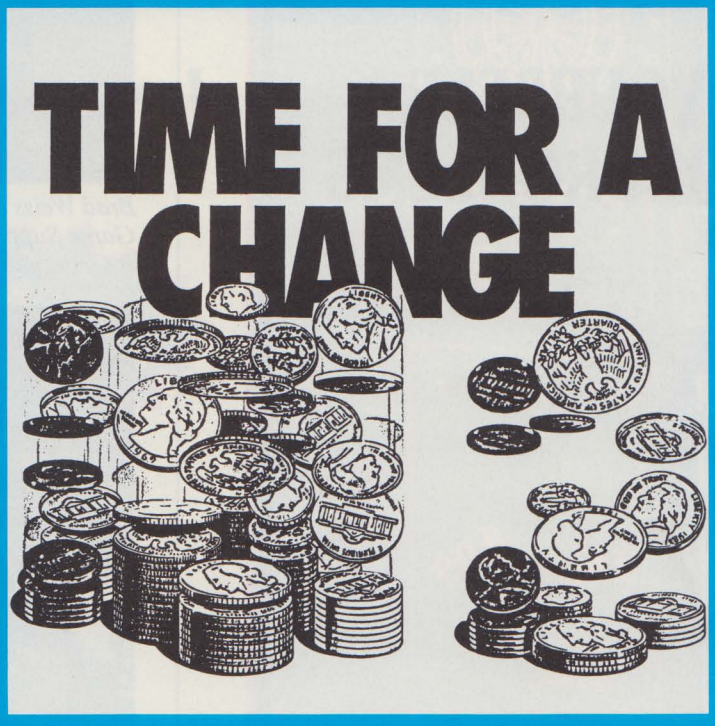

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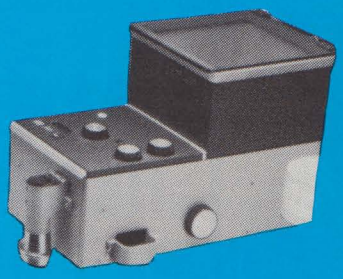

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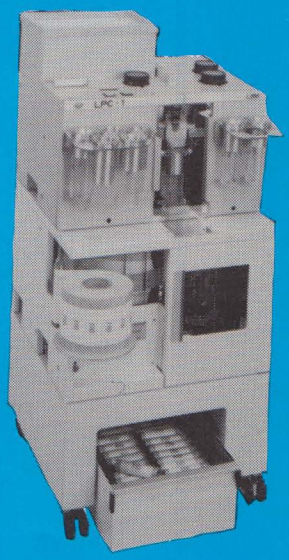

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Continued from page 34

Brad Weiss of Cdn. Amusement Game Supply Ltd. of Burnaby, B.C. stopping by to say hello.

Action at the Williams booth was steady, especially around the Jokerz! pinball machines.

Continued on page 38

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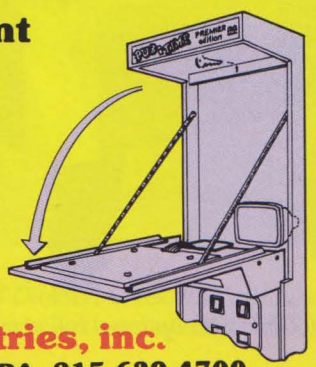

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ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 36

called the **WallStar**. The WallStar unit is designed to interface with Rowe's LaserStar and **HideAway** models. Rowe was also awarded "Best Jukebox of the Year" for 1988 at the ATEI show in London. Accepting the award was Joel Friedman, vice president of

A shipment of Carson City's SongBirds ready to fly the coupe!

music, and Jerry Gordon, vice president of distributor operations. Rowe also won the Play Meter award of excellence at Reno for their service and quality. This award was given on the basis of votes by operators nationwide.

At the opposite end of Aisle 1300 at ACME was **Seeburg** with their **Laser-Music** and **Classic** CD models. The Classic CD jukebox is housed in a nostalgia-type cabinet. Worth noting: Seeburg was the first company to bring the jukebox and Compact Disc technologies together.

Others displaying their acoustic wonders at ACME included: **Rock-Ola** and their **498CDX and Nostalgia** boxes; and **Wurlitzer** with their **One More Time** and **Carnegie** models.

There was certainly lots of action around the Carson City Parlour display. (Carson City Parlour has since changed their name to Carson City Manufacturing, Inc.) These guys had the most interesting display of CD/45 combo equipment at the show. CCM has packaged NSM units into scaled down versions of a '57 T-Bird, a 1949 pick-up, a '57 Chev back side turned into a sofa/jukebox, and last but not least, the stern of a classic ChrisCraft cruiser for nautical locations no doubt.

A recent release from Carson City Manufacturing announces that they have ceased production on all other coin operated equipment and have turned all their energies toward producing their "Theme Boxes". According to Carson City sales manager, Paul Harmon, "We're still approximately three to five weeks from the date the order is placed to the ship date – even though we've increased our staff and expanded our facilities."

Harmon credits much of the success of the SongBird "Theme Box" to the operators who have successfully installed these units in locations where there were no jukeboxes before. "We thought that we'd sell a few units to a number of operators who had a special location or two. We've done that, but what's really made the difference are several operators that have purchased a great number of units and taught us how we should approach the marketing of SongBirds and our other models," he added.

Golf, Tables, And Darts

Big things are happening in the world of coin-op golf amusement games. They come in a variety of styles and perhaps one which deserves a special mention is that of a Canadian manufacturer, GolFore Ltd., of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

GolFore's Big Hitter was a popular attraction at the Betson booth at ACME '89. Those familiar with the show will recall that the game is marketed as Betson's Big Hitter, this is because Betson has the exclusive worldwide distribution rights, except for Canada and Australia. There was a steady line-up of duffers and "big hitters" ready to take a turn.

The game is a portable coin-op driving range with a captive ball system (ball fixed to a flexible tee). It's unique design allows a person not only to drive a golf ball, but adds a little skill to it as well. The object of the game is to drive towards a given pin, or flag, that is lit

GolFore's Big Hitter golf game.

up. This is the fun part. If you duff the ball, the machine humiliates you, if you drive it only a few yards, it encourages you to hit farther.

Completely automatic, the machine will tell players when to hit the ball, and will indicate where the ball landed on the course. Certainly a lot of fun, Big Hitter was definitely a big hit at the show.

According to Abe Pauls, president of GolFore, "production of the game is in full swing and we have our hands full trying to fill the orders because of the high demand. Our Edmonton, Alberta production facility is working at

Valley's Leopard electronic Pool Table with optional bill acceptor unit.

ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

Cheryl Tracey (L) and Sandy Manor of Playfair Shuffleboards, Fort Wayne Indiana.

Al Artus of SunSoft with their VS. Platoon kit.

Left to right are Ace Novelty's John Minkove, Gelly Borromeo, Rorie Keller and Ed Plotkin with Gumby.

Walking the aisles at ACME '89 Reno.

Roy Erickson of Dawson Creek B.C.'s House of Coin dropped in to say hello to us at the CCB booth.

Wurlitzer was well represented by (L-R) Mike Berard, Klaus Telgheder, and Bob Reno.

ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

Vari-Tech Company's Mini ProGolf with video display and LED scoring.

capacity." Pauls has high expectations for his game, he's hoping for "Game of the Year" honors and feels confident that Big Hitter will come through for GolFore.

For more information on the Big Hitter, contact: Abe Pauls, GolFore Ltd., 290 McDermot Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0T2. You can reach him by phone at (204) 942-GOLF or by FAX at (204) 949-9154.

Also at the show, the **Vari-Tech Company** was showing its **Mini Pro-Golf**. The current version of the game accommodates 1 or 2 players to 18 holes and displays 2.25-inch LED characters on a digital scoreboard. The video screen ties in scoreboard figures with additional information and provides leasing opportunities for on-location advertising. Scorecards, provided to all players, contain game results hole-by-hole and also offer advertising possibilities.

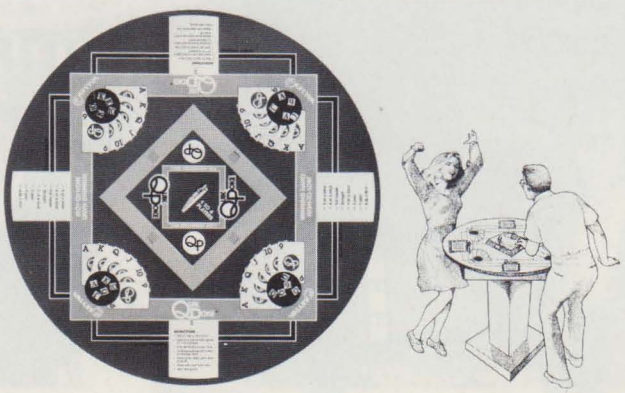
Intermark Amusements Inc. was showing off their **Pro Golf** simulator. This unit is unique in that it utilizes microwave technology in the sensors that measure the speed of the ball and the distant hit. A complete electronic display lets players know the accuracy of their shot and gives them a complete performance rundown. Intermark also displayed their new **Touchdown Football** game.

U.S. Indoor Golf from **Troy M Enterprises** allows for up to four players. The game vends a nine-hole round of golf in three minutes for single players. Match Play or Tournament Round is for one to four players and there's a Skin's Game for two or three players.

There was no shortage of table games at this year's ACME. Companies displaying pool, air hockey, and foosball (table soccer) and shuffleboard games were kept busy throughout the event. Why the continuing interest in these games? It seems as though operators are finding that table-type games are constant earners.

New equipment on display at the show included **Valley's** new **Leopard** electronic pool table. This table can be preset for Rack Play, Time Play, or Rack/Time Play making it fully adaptable for the particular requirements of the operator's market or locations. It also features the latest in electronic components and operator-selectable DIP switch settings. In Rack Play, the operator can set the cost per rack or game from 50 cents and up, in multiples of 25 cents. The number of racks is clearly shown on the table's LCD display. In Time Play, the operator also has great flexibility in setting the length of time and the cost to play. Another interesting feature is the programmable multiple pricing for rack of time play on a daily or weekly basis. The Leopard has also been designed to

Continued on page 45



Valley's Quik Poke coin game with electronic dice for up to four players.

MUSIC

with Joe Pankus

Marketing The New Jukebox

Joe Pankus is Executive Vice President and a member of the Board of Directors of Seeburg Corporation. For the last ten years, he has been involved in consulting; assisting many companies in developing successful marketing and business plans.

As we all know, the Jukebox celebrates its 100 year anniversary this coming November 23rd. It's exciting. Television, radio trade and consumer press is giving the topic generous attention. In our industry, however, too little attention and information is gathered and delivered to the Music Operator to help him be more effective and profitable.

First, let's look at what you have in the way of a music product that is predominantly on your route today – a 45 RPM Jukebox. More importantly, it only plays a 45 RPM vinyl record which is the real problem. Whether you want to recognize or ignore the fact that this music format is going to be obsolete may very well determine your operating profitability over the next five years. Take a peek at Fig. 1 and it will clearly show that vinyl shipments are about one-half of what they were three years ago. I could give you more indicators and trends – more than you could shake a stick at – demonstrating that the 45 RPM Jukebox will be ultimately sold by the pound, or used as a boat anchor.

Editor Tom Noonan of Billboard Magazine, in his AMOA keynote address, told the Operators to get out of the 45 RPM and go with Compact Discs. Nolan Buschnell, creator of the first video games, publicly stated that vinyl is going the way of the dinosaur. Tony Montgomery, head of all single sales for RCA Records, stated at a recent AMOA seminar that the cassette single went from zero to about 35 per cent of his total single sales in less than a year. Twenty minutes before RCA's statement, one of our so-called experts said that the cassette single is "virtually dead" and would never replace the 45 RPM record. CBS Records just announced that most of its material will not be available in Japan on vinyl after the Spring of this year.

Funny isn't it? Experts in our industry have expounded that solid state electronics won't last and that the video Jukebox is the cure-all for all Operators' ills. And, most of the experts outside our industry are publicly saying, "wake up and smell the coffee, it's happening." The Operators who started the change-over in '87 and '88 are ahead; those who haven't, better start pouring the coffee!

Remember when the video game faucet went dry in 1982? It wiped out about 40 per cent of the amusement operators. Now, you can say that a lot of those operators were lousy operators anyway, but because of that wipeout, banks and lending institutions are still not going to take a chance on providing expansion funds to video game operators.

The telltale signs of that debacle were right under noses. Just look back. PTA organizations were revolting, towns and cities dramatically increased license fees, and some wouldn't allow more than two games in one establishment. You couldn't have a game within 300 yards of a school, and parents were actually picketing establishments. Today, with the increased awareness towards drunk driving, would-be tavern goers are spending less in those establishments, and this is having a definite effect on the amount spent in Jukeboxes. It seems as though the Amusement and Music industries are constantly under fire from action groups of one sort or another. Interesting to note though, that while all this negative attention was being turned to these industries, few of our trade experts said "Hey! We ought to take a good look at this trend and find some alternatives."

To succeed now and into the '90s, the Music Operator has to adapt – think differently. Because things are different, including new technology and entertainment alternatives, he must adopt the philosophy that "in order for me to be successful, I must make sure that I make the locations successful." The Operator must also be ready to say "No" to the location that wants to entertain his patrons at your expense, and "No" to the location that demands a 50/50 split. Tell the location that if he wants a 50/50 arrangement, then he gets sound equipment...not Compact Discs. He must also hold his ground on locations that want five to seven plays for a $1 coin, which is probably the Canadian average on a 45 RPM Jukebox. Fig. 2 will give some idea of what can be earned by pricing the music at 3 plays to $1, taking $50 off the top each week, then splitting the remaining amount. Just remember that a 45 box averages about $60 per week gross, while a dedicated CD box does over $150 per week in the U.S.

Does this statement sound familiar? "I've added more than 30 pieces to my route in the last year, but my revenue is about the same and my profits are slightly down."

If the above is true, take your operation apart. Cut it, slice it, separate it, and break it down into as many sensible and single elements as you can. If you've got three collectors, that's three elements. How about those 100 locations? That's another 100 elements. Lump your pieces into categories such as pins, Jukes, darts, video games, cranes, pokers etc. That's another six elements to your business.

Remember, nobody said that being successful was going to be a trip with your feet up on the desk. Once you've done this exercise, either manually or with a computer, determine what each element contributes to your profitability. Equipment and location analysis is easy – people are a little tougher.

Fig. 1 – Units Shipped (in millions)

	1985	1987	1988 (est.)
Cassettes	339.1	410.0	420.0
CDs	22.6	102.1	150.0
LPs	167.0	107.0	83.0
45s	120.7	82.0	71.0
Cassingles	0	5.1	14.0
Total	**694.4**	**706.2**	**738.0**

Fig. 2 — Weekly Operator Share After Location Split

Daily Songs Played	Play Hours Req'd		1 *50/50 #11/$1	2 *50/50 #9/$1	3 *50/50 #7/$1	4 *50/50 #5/$1	5 &50/50/50 #4/$1	6 &50/50/50 #3/$1/	7 +60/40 #3/$1
40	2	=	13	16	20	28	60	72	56
60	3	=	19	23	30	42	78	95	84
80	4	=	25	31	40	56	95	118	112
100	5	=	32	39	50	70	113	142	140
120	6	=	38	47	60	84	130	165	168
140	7	=	45	54	70	98	147	188	196
160	8	=	51	62	80	112	165	212	224

* Revenue in cashbox equally divided between operator and location
& 50/50/50 denotes $50 off the top to the operator, remainder equally divided
\+ 60/40 split with 60% to operator, 40% to location
\# Number of songs played per $1 inserted by patron

Here's another great remark, "I lost a location to another operator... glad it happened... only did about $15 a week in the Jukebox at my end, and the cigarettes and games were also lousy. Why would anyone want the account anyway?" However, it is a common trait among operators that they will keep a money-losing location out of fear that one specific competing operator will grab it. Keep your good accounts through promotional marketing and attention to his real needs, not by lowering the price per play or by reducing your split. Let the other guy do that. Seldom do I hear a Music Operator announce that he lost a good account to a bar disc jockey, live music, or a foreground/background music system. This, of course, happens more than we'd like to admit. Promotional marketing is an important area that we'll hopefully cover in later issues.

You, as a professional Music Operator, can create more beverage consumption through music programming. The most common myth in our business is that when the music gets hot, about 100 beats per minute or better, the patron thirst level is at its highest. Wrong!

It has been statistically proven that the slower and more mournful songs open and shut the cash register drawer more frequently. For example, "Lucille", by Kenney Rogers, tops the thirst hit parade.

Couples comprise about 35 per cent of the patrons entering a pub or tavern. They stay a little over an hour, on average, and have three drinks. Larger groups, though they stay longer, actually drink less per person. More than one half of the patrons come in solo, about 50 per cent of those are feeling little pain by the time they leave. And, of those, one out of eight should definitely not get behind the wheel.

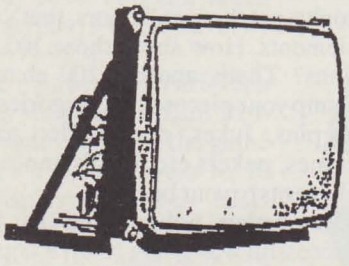
The above statistics were compiled from a study performed by the Office of Alcohol Abuse at the University of Minnesota. In addition, the report commented on some of the scenes the researchers witnessed: "There was a hubbub of activity. Suddenly, the Jukebox stopped, and the bar came to a standstill. Here's the lifeblood of the place. It was the atmosphere created by the music."

Music is back... in a big way due to Compact Discs. But music won't be your lifeblood if you decide to give it away like this industry has over the last fifteen years. Get three year agreements, don't settle for a 50/50 split, go for (demand) $50 to $75 per week to pay debt service — then split the rest. For your own sake, keep the price per play up at the three or four play per $1 level.

Note: In order to better serve you, the reader, please drop a note to the editor if you would (or wouldn't) like to see more of this type of article. □

Classifieds — Page 59

JETCO HIGH QUALITY AND HIGH PERFORMANCE COLOUR MONITORS



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The Sign
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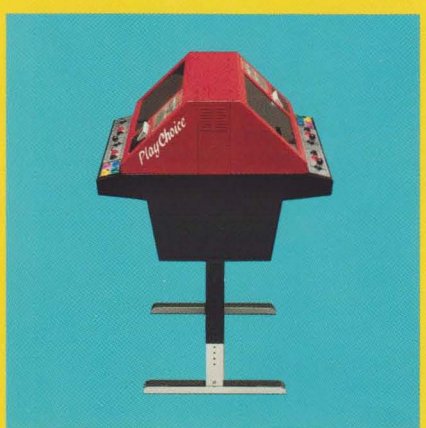
Make the Change That Will Bring You More Change.

The New PlayChoice™ Kit for the VS. Dual Upright and VS. Dual Table Systems.

It's time for a change. Time to power up your profits by giving players more game choices, more sizzling excitement than ever before.

It's time for the new PlayChoice™ Kit for the VS. System® dual monitor games from Nintendo®. It will change the left side of a VS. Dual Upright and the main side of a VS. Dual Table into star attractions with enhanced screen graphics, big-name titles and endless menu variety.

And that's the kind of change that will work wonders for your collections—especially in a single-game site or limited-space location.



The Choice is Yours—Five Games or Ten.

Restore the excitement with either a five-game or ten-game kit. Choose our standard mix of best-selling titles or take your pick from our growing roster of over 30 games.

Either way, you're assured the quality and player appeal of games that keep the interest growing and the cash flowing.

Make Your Play.

Now's the time to get in on the action. Call your authorized Nintendo distributor or Nintendo of America Inc. at (206) 882-2040.

The PlayChoice Kit for the VS. Dual Upright and Table Systems—make it your choice for change.

Nintendo®

The Systems Company

Nintendo of America Inc.
P.O. Box 957, Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 882-2040

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ACME '89 HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 40

take an optional dollar bill acceptor and stacker.

Another Valley hit was their Quik Poke, a game based on Liar's Poker. This is available in a standing table model or a sit-down cocktail table version. The game is a 25 cent-type that consists of a round table with four player positions. Each player activates the dice electronically by pushing the button at each position. The dice are shaken electronically for a pre-set period of time, after which the game switches off. At this point, each player then declares their hand. Four players can play for a single quarter, and a variety of games can be played.

Electronic darts were well represented at Reno. **Merit** displayed their **Pub Time Premier Edition** which has a 30-game built-in library that includes games such as 301 League, No-Score Cricket, 201 Cricket, and 101 Double In/Out. Other features include 10 game player menu, timed play (players can buy time by the 0.5 hour), and game rules are accessible during game play.

Arachnid was showing their new **Super 6 Plus II** upgrade kit for the 4500/5000 series. New Features of the Plus II include Double Bullseye, League Slot, and new decals. Games available on the Plus II include: 301 Open In/Open Out; Count Up; Tic-Tac Darts; 301 Double In/Double Out; 501 and 701. And, there's three new versions of Cricket: Regular 2 to 4 player; Cut Throat 2 to 4 player; and Team for 2 teams.

Great Lakes Darts Distributors and **Owl Darts** both came to Reno equipped to show their full lines of accessories for the electronic crowd. □

ACME '89 Stats
(1988 Figures in parentheses)

No. of Exhibitors..... 153 (134)
No. of First Time Exhibts..... 29
No. of Booths 507 (407)
Seminar Attendance.... 1434 (895)
Reg. Attendance..... 4633 (4504)

ACME '90 scheduled for Chicago, Illinois, Thursday, March 8 to Saturday, March 10, 1990.

Advertisement

Game System Adds To Easygoing Operations California-Style.

Fred Gillmann of southern California's Just Games finds PlayChoice easy to operate and profitable to own.

Sunny days, fresh ocean air, an easy, relaxed lifestyle — it's the California mystique. The good life on the coast. And, for Just Games' Fred Gillmann, there's more than a hint of truth in it.

Sure, business is business and daily operations still take their usual toll, but this southern Californian operator has found a way to make servicing his locations easier and his business more profitable with the Nintendo® PlayChoice™ System.

With the majority of his locations consisting of military bases and bowling centers spread across San Diego, Long Beach and San José, Gillmann appreciates the PlayChoice-5's ease of operations which make it a virtually hassle-free piece of equipment.

Comparing the system's life cycle and service requirements to a video juke box, Gillmann pointed out that his PlayChoice-5™ units, like their VS.System® predecessors, are steady contributors to his company's success.

"When the VS.System first hit the market, we made a heavy commitment," recalled Gillmann. "Our return on investment has been more than satisfactory and has been a contributing factor in our growth from 125 machines to 800 pieces of equipment on location over a four year period. I firmly believe that conversion to the PlayChoice System is a must for today's fast-growing operator."

Since converting to PlayChoice-5, Gillmann has had an opportunity to witness the advancement of Nintendo's system technology firsthand.

"The multi-game system cabinet is a viable and profitable part of the industry," commented Gillmann. "PlayChoice offers some real advantages. It gives players more games to choose from in a single cabinet. And, with Nintendo's ongoing releases of software, I can update the system at a reasonable cost versus the expense of buying a new dedicated game or kit.

"Its real advantage, though, comes in the operating convenience of the system itself. There's no need to rotate cabinets — saving time and expense that can take away from a machine's bottom-line performance."

And for Gillmann and operators everywhere, that kind of hassle-free operations can make life a little easier. Pass the suntan lotion, will you, please?

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TECHNICAL CORNER

Atari Star Wars Color Modification

Matt J. McCullar
Forum Fair Arcade
Arlington, Texas

Life After Death

Star Wars has been around for several years and still enjoys a dedicated following. Since Atari has thankfully provided us with a new high-voltage transformer for the monitor, this game is now making money for us again. But there are hundreds of them out there, and every single one of them looks alike. To make your *Star Wars* stand out from the crowd and pull in some new players, this fifteen minute mod will clearly show a difference in how the on-screen graphics look as well as the amount in the cashbox. No parts are required, so this won't cost anything. It will work on both stand-up and cockpit models.

Initial Check

Before we get started, keep in mind that this will work only with the original Amplifone color X-Y monitor. I have seen some *Star Wars* machines with Wells-Gardner monitors from Tempest and they are not compatible. I will cover how to work on the Wells-Gardner units in a later article.

The Modification

The color X-Y monitor accepts three color signals from the game computer: red, green and blue. These signals pass through three separate color amplifiers, but the amps are exactly the same. The computer's output color signals have the same amplitude, and are almost exactly alike. Figure 1 helps illustrate this.

All this system does is determine the color each on-screen object will have. If you disconnect the red and green color signals and swap them around, then the red signal will go into the green amplifier; conversely, the green signal will go to the red amplifier. This makes some of the on-screen characters different colors than your players are used to. This will get their attention!

Simple, yes? Well, let's take it one step further and swap all three color signals. But before we do, let's take a look at what *Star Wars* looks like before working on it. Here is a list of some of the more prominent objects and their colors:

Red
Bunkers (objects that shoot at you in the trench and tower sequence), and the flight instructions during the attract mode.

Green
T.I.E. fighters, the towers, and the trench.

Blue
High scores, the *Star Wars* logo during attract mode and the player's laser fire.

Procedure

Warm up the soldering iron and be sure that the game is turned off. Remove the X-Y deflection board and use Figure 2 to locate the general area to concentrate on. Look for the three wires, the red, the green and the blue. These will each have a black wire entwined around them; the black wires are grounds which are commonly connected on the board, you do not need to worry about them.

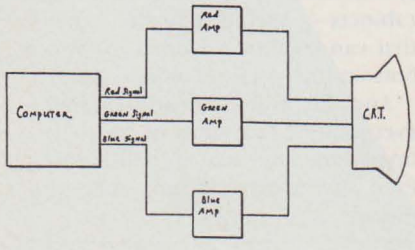

Figure 1. Color amplifier of X-Y Deflection Board. Block diagram.

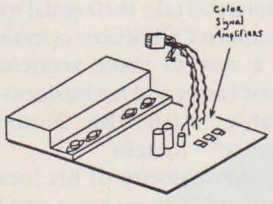

Figure 2. X-Y Color Deflection Board layout

These color wires represent the color inputs for the individual amplifiers and the board is labelled BLU, GRN and RED where each wire connects to it. Figure 3 shows their exact location.

Now that you've found these wires, desolder them (but not the black wires). With solder braid or a solder-

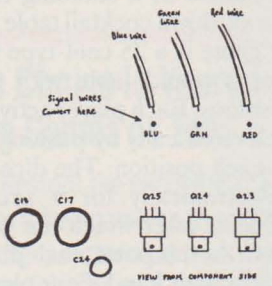

Figure 3. Appearance of Deflection Board before modification.

vacuum, clean the empty holes. If the bare ends of the wires still look clean and neat, go ahead and proceed to the next step, otherwise, cut, strip and tin the ends.

Using Figure 4 as a guide, solder each wire into its denoted hole:

Green wire to RED hole
Blue wire to GRN hole
Red wire to BLU hole

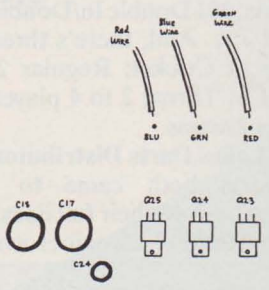

Figure 4. After modification.

Final Check

Now reinstall the X-Y deflection board into the game and turn it on. You should notice a big difference in the graphics. This is because the computer color signals are now driving different color amps. Figure 5 shows a schematic version of the modification. The following effects should be visible:

Red
T.I.E. fighters and trench
Green
High scores, logo and player's laser fire
Blue
Flight instructions and bunkers

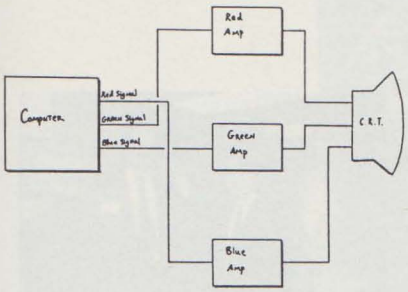

Figure 5. Block diagram of color amps after modification.

Jammin'

This is by no means the only color pattern to use. You may want to swap only two colors instead of three. At our own arcade, we arranged all five of our *Star Wars* games so that no two have the same color scheme. It keeps the regular players guessing and brings in new ones who know what the game should look like and play it because of its different look. If you have a supply of working X-Y boards in the workshop, you could rearrange each one's color pattern and simply swap out the board whenever you want to change its appearance. This can be done in less than five minutes and can be done from month to month.

Tech Note

An Atari technician said they used Amplifone color X-Y monitors in *Gravitar, Space Duel, Quantum, Major Havoc* and *Black Widow.*

Credit: StarTech Journal □

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Advertisement

"To Your Health" — Distributor Toasts Operators' Success With Strong Product.

Lester Godwin of Godwin Distributors keeps operators happy and healthy with products targeted to perform.

It's a two-way street — the mutually-supportive relationship between distributor and operator.

The first order of business of the distributor is to make the operator successful. All else falls into place once the goal is achieved. Such is the results-oriented thinking of Lester Godwin of Godwin Distributors.

"Our concern is to have the operator as healthy as possible," stressed Godwin. "If we sell him equipment that will help his business stay healthy, then we're doubly rewarded. We're able to make a profit on what we sell him now. And, what we sell him now helps maintain his business health so he can buy more equipment from us in the future. It's a stance that benefits everyone."

To help his operators reach that level of success, Godwin offers and supports quality products — products that are suited to diverse location needs and provide good return on investment

"In our industry," Godwin comments, "longevity is a real critical factor in an operator's buying decision. He wants longevity in terms of both the manufacturer's support of the game itself and its ability to earn money over a period of time."

In looking for products and manufacturers that meet that profile, Godwin turns to Nintendo®. "When we sell Nintendo's PlayChoice™ equipment to an operator," said Godwin, "we're selling a real value to our customer.

"Nintendo's commitment to maintaining the PlayChoice System is one operators can be comfortable with. They know that the hardware they buy will be supported by an ongoing release of software to keep the system updated for a long period of time. And that makes it all worthwhile."

Godwin finds one type of location particularly well suited for PlayChoice-10®. "We don't target the system for high-volume, multi-game locations," the said. "Instead, we look for locations limited to one or two games. We can turn a mediocre site earning $60-$70 a week into a steady earner of $100 or more with a PlayChoice. And that's consistent collections, week after week."

It's all part of knowing your business, and at Godwin Distributors, Lester Godwin knows his business very well.

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Manufacturers & Operators Turn Out To Support Pacific Vend Distributors At Grand Opening Of New Vancouver Premises

As we reported to you in our Feb/Mar '89 issue, Pacific Vend Distributors was about to welcome their customers to their new 23,000 square-foot facilities at 8250 Fraser Street in Vancouver, B.C. On March 17, 1989, Sam and Karl Feder officially opened their doors to an enthusiastic crowd of operators, agents and interested buyers.

Manufacturer representatives present at the opening included: Jerry Momoda, Atari; Brian Duke, Capcom; Lenore Sayers, Sega; Damon Paramore, Dynamo; Tom Cahill, Williams; and Joe Peck from Amazing Games. Some of the games on display for those in attendance included Williams' "Narc" with its anti-drug message, and Atari's fast-paced "Hard Drivin'" driving simulator. Although "Narc" made its debut at the AMOA show in Chicago last fall, its popularity is still strong and this was proven at the ACME show in Reno and at PVD's opening.

"The 150 operators in attendance enjoyed themselves very much, and their response to the new facilities was very positive," said Karl Feder. "One of the big attractions was the pinball maintenance seminar given by Williams' Tom Cahill, some 70 people took part and found it to be very informative. Overall all, we had a very successful showing." he added.

As for how the industry is doing, Karl said, "...those who visited at the opening had a very positive attitude toward the Canadian coin amusement industry. This seems to contrast with what's happening in the U.S. where operators seem to be running more older games and customers are becoming unhappy as a result. In Canada on other hand, we seem to be seeing more newer games out there, and this keeps customers coming back."

Sam Feder (left), Jerry Momoda of Atari, and Karl Feder (right) in front of Hard Drivin'.

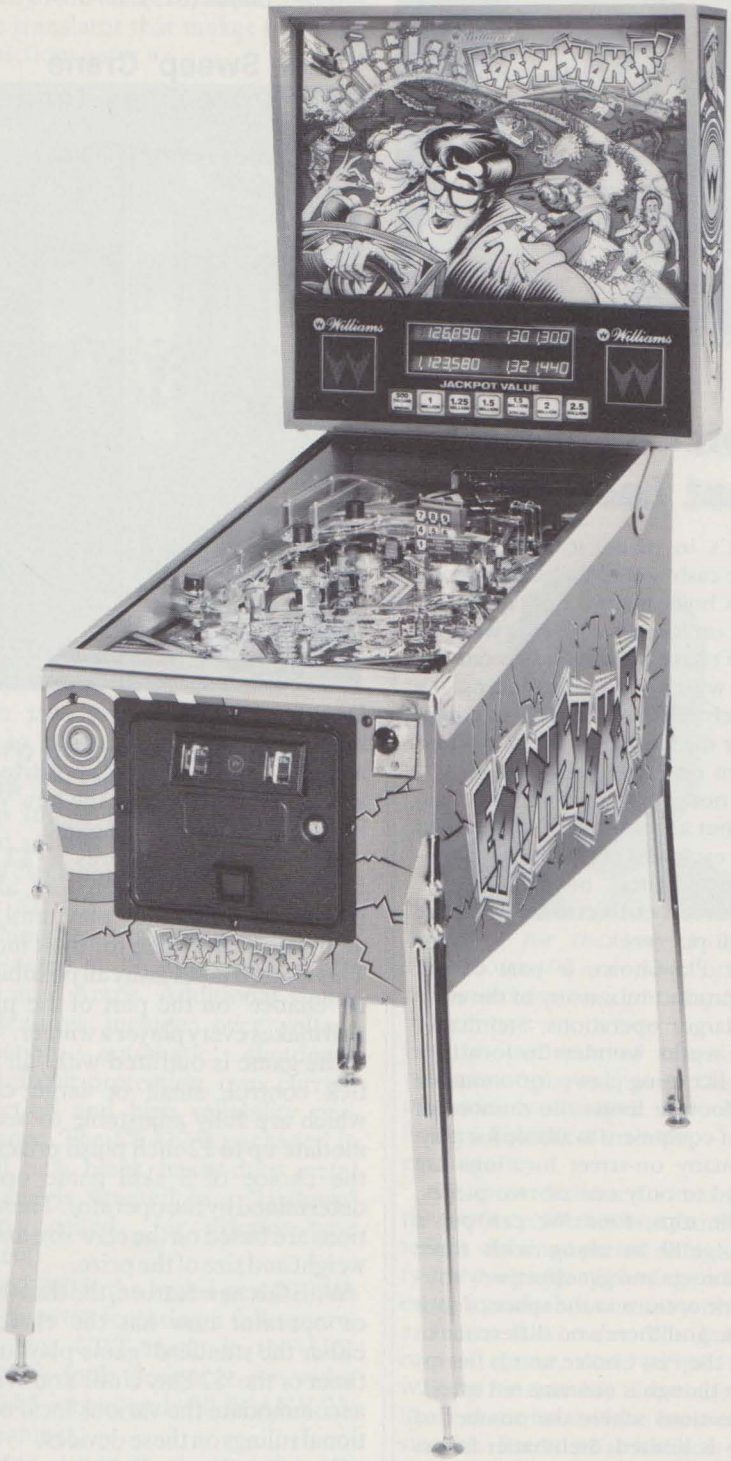
Karl added that, "Pacific Vend's own route of 800 machines is doing superbly and arcade collections are are up 40 per cent in March over the same period last year."

Sam Feder and Williams' Tom Cahill in front of "Narc".

Sam and Karl's move into their new premises is a show of confidence that will undoubtedly help bolster that positive attitude. Their committment to the industry, and to their customers, over the last 12 years will help provide a solid base for growth in the years to come. They will continue to serve the Lower Mainland and the rest of British Columbia as well as Alberta and Saskatchewan. If you would like contact Pacific Vend Distributors, you can do so at (604) 324-2164. □

Sam and Karl Feder surrounded by their guests at the grand opening.

NEW PRODUCTS



Williams Shakes Up Pin Industry With Earthshaker — First Machine To Shake & Quake

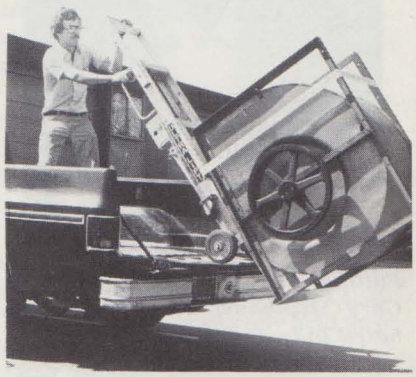
Earthshaker, the latest sensation from Williams, is the first pinball machine that actually moves, shakes and quakes.

To cause an "earthshaker", all players need to do is shoot for the Zones that the Earthquake Institute has predicted will cause the next quake. Then it's on to The Fault for a moveable feast of non-stop pinball thrills and excitement. Earthshaker's imaginative, feature-packed playfield includes a challenging plunger skill shot, ramp miles that deliver a bonus bonanza, and an underground quake shelter with special Match Up feature that can award a range of increased point values as well as two-ball Quick Multi-Ball play. There is also the opportunity for a spectacular million point shot. In addition, Earthshaker incorporates three-ball multi-ball action and a unique jackpot feature for bonus scoring of extra balls or specials.

Other features include: a high-power and fidelity sound system; parallel-wired flipper circuitry; opto drop targets; modular plug-in boards for easier service; and improved microswitches and diagnostics to reduce maintenance and downtime.

For more information contact: Your local authorized Williams distributor, or Roger Sharpe at Williams Electronics Games (312) 267-2240.

Ultra Lift Hand Truck



The Ultra Lift Model 1000 power hand truck is a 120 pound all aluminum electric powered unit with a 1000 pound lifting capacity. The Model 1000 will save precious time and money, and reduce fatigue, injuries and damage to merchandise.

This hand truck is completely versatile. It can lift loads on the level, up or down stairs, on or off trucks, between loading docks and trucks, and over obstacles such as curbs or thresholds. A concave barrel handling attachment is also available.

The Ultra Lift is indispensable to coin-op amusement operators, vending machine operators, moving companies, computer companies and many more trades that are involved in moving heavy objects.

For more information on the Ultra Lift Model 1000 and accessories, contact: Ultra Lift Corporation, #3-10111

Gilbert Rd., Richmond B.C. V7E 2H2 (604) 274-8682.

Brunelle Digital Multimeter

Brunelle Instruments Inc. has introduced their Model 4040 digital multimeter. The 4040 has the following features: 3.5-inch LCD display; 34 ranges; yellow high-impact case; rotary switch selection; capacitance range; built-in frequency counter; continuity tester; and diode test. The unit comes complete with test leads, manual, battery and spare fuse. It also comes with a two year warranty. The model 4040HD comes complete with fused test probes for added safety in industrial applications.

Brunelle Instruments Inc., 73-6th Range South, St. Elie-d'Orford, PQ J0B 2S0; phone (819) 563-9096.

Advertisement

Operator Finds A "Choice" Solution For Limited Equipment Loctions.

Putting PlayChoice in its place — Gary Steinhauer of Indianapolis-based Indy Amusements.

In every business, choices have to be made with success riding on the smart decisions.

It's no different in the world of coin-op when an operator has to choose which equipment to place in a given location. The right decision will maximize earnings potential and improve bottom-line performance.

That's why Gary Steinhauer of Indy Amusements makes the Nintendo® Playchoice-10® a part of his site success formula. For Steinhauer, the PlayChoice™ System makes economic sense in his network of over 150 on-street locations throughout central Indiana.

In Steinhauer's view, the PlayChoice unit has "become a stable item in the industry." It performs its low-maintenance earning function in much the same way as a pool table or an electronic soft tip dart machine. Once it's in place, it continues to generate cash without a lot of upkeep.

"PlayChoice is a piece of equipment you put on loction and let it work — you don't have to constantly rotate the cabinet which reduces expenses. It's a relatively inexpensive piece of equipment for the ten game variety it offers, so return on investment is high.

"It's not a barn-burner," he cautions, "but a steady, reliable source of income each and every week." At Indy Amusements' best locations, PlayChoice collections average $100-120 per week.

While PlayChoice is part of the typical product mix at any of the company's larger operations, Steinhauer finds it works wonders in locations where licensing laws or rentable square footage limits the number of pieces of equipment available for play.

"So many on-street locations are restricted to only one or two pieces, or at the tops, four. We can put a PlayChoice-10 in along with three other cabinets and get effectively thirteen game options in the space of four cabinets. And there's no difference in the way the PlayChoice unit is licensed, even though it contains ten titles."

In situations where the number of cabinets is limited, Steinhauer favors his PlayChoice-10 solution for increasing the location's earning potential and widening the selection of games for greater player appeal. It would appear his philosophy is working, for at Indy Amusements, success is riding high on having made the right choices.

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"Clean Sweep" Crane Gives Prize Every Time

Due to the controversy over crane machines, Smart Industries, of Des Moines, Iowa has taken a positive step as the manufacturer of the new vending "Clean Sweep" crane game.

The new crane features a "$2 Play Until You Win" system that allows players to continuous play until they are redeemed a prize for their money. This feature takes away all possibilities of "chance" on the part of the player and makes every player a winner.

The game is outfitted with full joystick control, small or large claws, which are fully adjustable to accommodate up to 12-inch plush prizes and the choice of 3 skill game options determined by the operator. These options are based on the claw size and the weight and size of the prize.

With this new feature, the distributor or operator now has the choice of either the standard "game play" under timer or the "$2 Play Until You Win" to accommodate the various local or national rulings on these devices.

Contact: Smart Industries Corp., Mfg., 1626 Delaware Ave., Des Moines, IA 50317-2938; (515) 265-9900; Fax: (515) 265-3148.

1 2 3 Video Now In Canada

The world's first, totally self-contained and fully-automated video recording booth, 1 2 3 Video, has now been introduced to Canada.

The 1 2 3 Video allows users to

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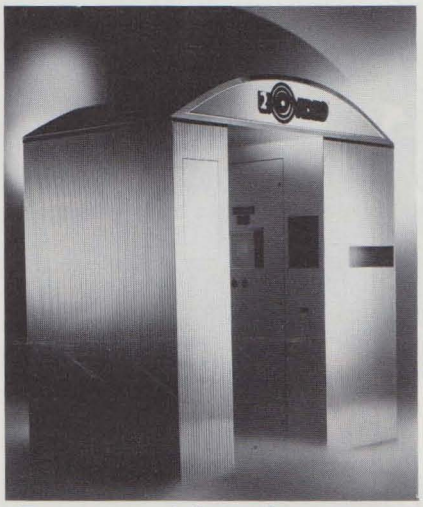

For more information contact: American Idea Management, 2 Main Street, Stoneham, MA 02180; (617) 279-1100.

Sharp Image Electronics Adds To Product Line-up

Sharp Image Electronics has introduced several new products to their line of electronic devices.

The SI 412 is an all new design switching power supply that features +5V rated at 12 Amps and +12V rated at 2 Amps. Additional standard features include: over voltage protection, automatic shutdown, short circuit protection, over current protection and high reliability performance. The ST 412 is packaged in an all new black heavy-duty metal case and is situated in a "laydown" design suited for drawer-type cabinets.

The SI 300 is the brand new 27-inch color monitor featuring a full square, black face CRT made in the U.S. This new look design is no wider than 24.5-inches and will fit ANY 25-inch cabinet.

SI 310 is a 9-inch color monitor and the SI 311 is an 11-inch monitor. These comprise the latest additions to the ever-growing line. These new compact units are assembled in S. Korea and are ideal for countertops, gaming and other specialty amusement devices.

For more information on Sharp Image products contact them at 8000 Wheatland Ave., Unit C, Sun Valley, CA 91352; (818) 767-8855.

New Four Player B-Ball

Design Plus Industries has introduced a four-player edition of its Quik Shot basketball game that features all-steel construction and operator settings for coinage, game time, and points for bonus games.

Other features include fast ball return for no jam-ups, scoring up to 199 points, and a flashing high game score to encourage challenge matches. Options include bill acceptor, ticket dispenser and crown top net that keeps balls from bouncing away from the playing area.

The game is narrow in width, has adjustable height, and can be easily moved. Two models are available: Standard measures 10-feet long by 31.5-inches wide with adjustable height of 8-feet 3-inches to 9-feet 6-inches; Compact measures 8-feet long by 31.5-inches wide and 7-feet 10-inches high.

Design Plus Industries, 737 E. Marietta Ave., Peoria, IL 61614; (309) 682-9359. □

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The Power To Perform: Sometimes Slow And Steady Wins The Race.

Earnings for the long haul with PlayChoice-10 are part of Ernie Barberio's business philosophy.

It's the yardstick of success. The measure of player appeal. The index of game obsolescence. It's what the bottom-line is all about — game earnings.

For most dedicated video games, the profit cycle takes on a familiar pattern. A sustained period of high activity and eye-popping earnings is followed by a gradual downturn with rarely a chance at recovery. The game has run its course, done its job and is waiting for new life elsewhere, most likely in the form of the latest conversion kit. But at what real cost to the operator?

While the freshness and appeal of dedicated games will never be replaced, their role in an operator's overall profit picture can be augmented with games that go the distance. Games that earn steadily over the long haul without peaks and valleys in performance.

At Barberio Music Company, operator Ernie Barberio is using a system that works with rather than against the changing nature of player interests and game appeal with the Nintendo® PlayChoice-10®.

As part of the equipment mix offered at the company's twenty-five locations in the greater San Antonio area, PlayChoice™ units are providing consistent weekly collections averaging $95.

While that figure won't turn many heads, it is important for its reliability and long-term profitability. Factors that can have a major impact on overall return on investment..

"Our PlayChoice units are up against a lot of other competitive forces in a location," Barberio said. "But, they have consistently held their own very well."

Part of that success story is attributable to Barberio's ability to stay in touch with the game play activity on the system. Games are rotated and updated every four to five months, earlier if the need is indicated, to keep collections consistent.

"We've also targeted PlayChoice as the best choice in locations where the amount of rentable floor space is limited as in the military clubs we service. It's simply in our best interests to go in with the best machines possible and that includes a PlayChoice-10," Barberio added.

For Barberio and other operators committed to the PlayChoice System's long-term earnings power, sometimes slow and steady wins the race for profitability after all.

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Starburst from page 16

revenue- making life on some machines, it would seem impossible that a machine costing upwards of five or six thousand dollars could possibly pay for itself in a reasonable amount of time. According to Keywood: " What we're seeing in terms of depreciation these days is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 70%. The sad thing here is that some operators just don't realize how high that depreciation is, and what kind of effect it has on their business. Some operators forget that, not only does a machine have to pay for itself, but it also has to pay his overhead costs as well."

And these days, those operating costs seem to be taking off at a breathtaking rate. Consider the recent increases in the costs of liability insurance alone, for some owners of arcades, this can be a staggering amount. Add to this the ever-increasing costs of labor, fuel, vehicles etc. and it doesn't take long to see that a video machine really has to turn over some heavy bucks to keep the sun shining for its operator.

Len Keywood cites the high initial cost of dedicated games and the lack of innovative new product as being part of the problem. "Some of the dedicated videos we're seeing now have initially high buy-in prices, and when a game becomes dated, or begins to lose its appeal out in the market, manufacturers offer close-outs on remaining stock at vastly lower prices. Operators who bought the machines at the initially high price, then find themselves trying to unload the equipment (used) for a reasonable amount, but the problem is that the "reasonable amount" is higher than the manufacturers new *lower* price."

"Many new games are rehashes of older themes such as fighting and space-battles etc... there really haven't been many new novel products for the end-users," he added.

He went on to say, "these haphazard manufacturing and marketing techniques, in the end, haven't done a whole lot to endear the operator to the manufacturer."

Some of the many machines on hand for the next big auction.

More New Kits From Manufacturers

It seems now though, that manufacturers have been listening to the concerns of operators who are no longer interested in playing the depreciation game with their hard- earned money. The feeling at the AMOA show in the fall was that operators were looking for

Technician Shane Kim giving a motherboard a complete check.

more kit-type games from the manufacturers, and by the time ACME rolled around in late February, it appeared as though those concerns were addressed. According to Keywood, "U.S. manufacturers are now offering dedicated and kit forms of new games, in an effort to battle the parallel board market from overseas."

Copy Boards - A Dead Issue?

As for the copy board issue, it appears as though last year's legislation by the Canadian Government has settled this. Keywood says, "...copy boards have gone *way underground*. The Korean manufacturers of these "shabby quality" boards used to number about 60, but this has declined dramatically, as has the use of the boards."

What About Industry Image?

Len Keywood, like many others in the business, feels that the industry takes a bad rap because of many disreputable operators who just aren't knowledgeable about their own industry. "Many guys get into the business, buy a few machines, install them on a route and beyond that, do little else except empty the cash box. What they don't realize is that they have to be sensitive to the locations needs - be available at all hours in the event of an emergency such as vandalism or in case of repair. Some are turned off by this aspect, and as a result, we have a high operator turnover rate."

Cheryl Denney checks on the Silent Partner computer program

Sam Flagiello (L) sales; and Merrick Smith - shipping & recvg.

What Of The Future?

Keywood predicts that: "What we're going to see are the disappearances of the small location and small operator. Smaller guys are being bought out by bigger players all the time. The number of manufacturers, too, is also on the decline."

Keywood also has some advice for operators: "To remain competitive you have to educate yourself about the business. Study the marketplace and know your own business inside out. Rotate your machines heavily, control your costs, even if it means closing unprofitable locations." He adds: "The key is to constantly monitor the bottom line. Know what each and every machine is doing to your return on investment, even if it means computerizing to some extent, in this way, you can more accurately see how each every machine is helping, or hindering, the business."

Advertisement

Quick Change System Keeps Customers In The Game.

Harvey Fisher of Stan Harris & Company — keeping in step with changing times with the easily updatable PlayChoice-10.

It's a location like countless others across the country — a neighborhood convenience store, a quick-stop oasis for last-minute shopping. But this one, however, is also home for several of Stan Harris & Company's video games, including a PlayChoice-10® by Nintendo®.

In this convenience store, as in the company's nearly 2,000 other on-street loctions within the greater Delaware Valley, business success is tied up in a simple adage: The game won't pay unless the players play. And to keep the quarters dropping in the stores, taverns and bowling centers, the games must be kept current. Player excitement must be kept alive.

To meet that end, the company enlists a variety of game mix and rotation strategies throughout its tri-state area of operations. Among its more successful ventures is the use of Nintendo's PlayChoice-10 video games.

"We have close to 70 PlayChoice™ units within our network," cited Harvey Fischer of Stan Harris & Company. "The system has allowed us to place units in permanent position and enjoy a steady, consistent flow of revenues."

Recognizing that the key to the system's long-term profitability lies in software rotation, Fischer and his company have committed to building an extensive library of game titles.

"Updating a PlayChoice-10 is a simple operation — performed on location in minutes by our collectors," said Fischer. "We meter the collections on every game within the system and can pinpoint titles that have fallen off and need to be replaced.

"We figure the average life of a dedicated video game and cabinet to be three years. We're hoping to get seven to eight years from our PlayChoice units considering how easy and economical they are to update. With long-term favorable return on investment, we don't need to get astronomical weekly draws to make the system worthwhile," Fischer added.

What's hot and what's not? In the video game business as with fashion, public taste changes. With the quick change capability of PlayChoice-10 on their side, operators like Stan Harris & Company can beat the changing tides of consumer favor and keep players in the game — for fun and for profit.

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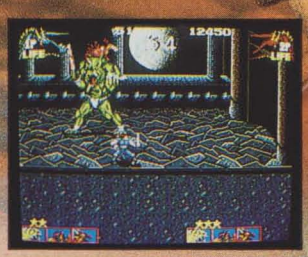

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Instructional and reference manual covering such subjects as: Basic Electronics, Semiconductors, Video Game Systems, Electronic Pinball Systems, Troubleshooting Techniques, Tools and Test Equipment, Schematic Reading and more. This 8-1/2" x 11" manual contains 65 pages of technical info for the servicing of electronic games and is priced at $24.95 (3.50 s/h).

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This manual is loaded with information on power supplies. Written by James Beck of BAM Engineering, edited by James Calore and published by *STAR★TECH Journal*. Every type of power supply is covered; including linear and switch mode. Power supply components, transformer and filter arrangements, high current supplies and troubleshooting is also presented in this very comprehensive manual. Inside Power Supplies is priced at $24.95 (3.50 s/h).

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FROM HERE & THERE

with Marion Walker

Nearly 40 years in the business, and still steaming ahead, **Southern Music** of Calgary, Alberta has over 4000 pieces on location. The firm is managed by **Tony Fisher** and part time retiree, Dick Johnson.

500 Jukeboxes Placed

Over the years, Southern Music has diversified to meet the demands of the customer. As a result, over 500 jukeboxes are out on location in smaller bars and lounges. According to Mr. Fisher, "one of the reasons for our success in this area is that our music selections for our various locations are programmed by our computers. This way, we can keep track of what's popular, and what's a dud."

"We've been in Music for well over a quarter of a century and we're probably as expert at running and programming jukeboxes as anyone in this business. We've been monitoring our Music this way for over a decade: watching closely, acting and programming accordingly with input from our route people and managers has made this a very profitable part of the business," said Mr. Fisher.

Valley Pool Tables Draw Good Tournament Crowds

Southern Music have well over 100 Valley pool tables out. "Over two years ago, we started pool and dart tournaments, and these have been extremely successful – but a lot of work!"

Pool and dart tournaments keep establishment traffic up, and as a result, location owners are very enthusiastic. Fisher finds that tournaments work well not only in the city, but in the smaller surrounding communities as well.

The secret to their success? "The one thing we learned over the years was, "don't put all your eggs in one basket". You have to diversify to keep healthy and prosperous in this industry."

Tony Fisher (left) and Ken Standell of Sourthern Music, at ACME '89.

* * *

Dave Howison's Game and Amusements Centres of Ottawa are thriving and growing with business increasing each year. Mr. Howison is now 80 per cent retired now and this expanding firm is headed by son-in-law **Brian Whitman**, a veteran of 10 years in the industry.

"Business looks even better for 1989 now that Canada's Copyright Bill is in force; the elimination of copy boards will help greatly," said Brian.

Major Investment In New Amusement Equipment

Brian knows that investing in new equipment to keep the customers interested and coming back is a necessity. "With over 1500 pieces of equipment out, to keep business peaking, we are continually buying new equipment. Last year alone we spent well over $300,000 on new games," Brian said. "Buying nowadays has to be a very cautious exercise, but with roughly 1500 games on location, averaging $3,000 each per year, our sales have grown to over 4.5 million dollars last year," he added.

A long-time relationship exists between Howison Amusements and their major equipment supplier, Laniel Automatic Machines of Mount Royal, Quebec. Early on they began buying equipment for their continually expanding company from this Montreal distributor and still do to this day.

Deal Only With Laniel Automatic

Dave Howison said many years ago: "I deal with one firm and that's Laniel Automatic and Jean Coutu. I suppose you could say that Jean gets all our equipment money. He helped me out when I was getting started, and over the years Jean and Laniel Automatic have given me excellent advice and service, and I'm grateful for that.

Works Hard At Customer Service

A key to the success of any business is its ability to deal with its customers fairly and honestly, and to be sensitive to their specific needs. "Our staff of 36 is kept hopping, keeping in close personal contact with our locations to keep them all hopefully satisfied. Public relations is very important, and we spend a great deal of effort and time on this," said Brian.

Brian adds: "...between Mac's and Beckers Convenience Stores, we have about 140 machines out, with one machine per store. As long as sales hold up, the machines stay put, but usually we rotate a fresh machine once a month."

As for the commission situation, Brian says that it's still 50%-50% in his area but there is the odd operator who's trying to horn in on some locations by offering a 40%-60% split in favor of the location.

What's Hot

According to Brian, "Any video with a steering wheel always does well for us and we can usually get 50 cent plays with the uprights. And Leland's "Quarterback has done very well, and is holding strong. Data East's "Tag Team" and "Robocop", and Sega's

"Power Drift" are all excellent." As well, he says that Williams pins are doing very well for them.

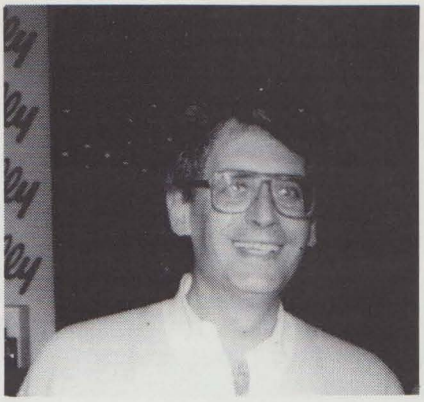
Basketball A Success

"We have 30 of Grayhound's basketball games on 50 cent play, and are very pleased with them. The arcades and bars love them as they appeal to all ages and are easy for ladies and children to play as well. Our basketball tournaments keep our Arcades humming!"

Pool tables are also doing a good business for Howison's . "In the Arcades we also have tournaments on the pool tables at 75 cent play. It takes time and effort to keep the tournaments going, but they are certainly worthwhile! Customers want continuous entertainment whether they're participating or just looking on." Brian also says that it's difficult to get bar owners interested and involved in tournament organizing, "...they leave it all up to us."

To sum it up, Brian feels good about the industry: "It's been good to our family, we all work hard, but there is certainly a good future ahead... and best of all, we enjoy it!"

* * *



Elliot Mintz, President of **Toronto Coin Machines Ltd.**, is a third-generation coin machine man. Mr. Mintz assumed the running of the firm, after the death of his father, Sol, four years ago. Toronto Coin was originally founded by Elliot's grandfather. This long-established and well respected company not only operates over 1,000 machines in the greater Toronto and surrounding area, but is also a seller and refurbisher of coin machines.

Fourth Generation

It looks as though the family tradition is going to continue at T.C. Elliot advises us that his 13 year-old son, Shawn, a whiz on computers, is introducing the company to this burgeoning technology. Shawn works at home, and with the company's daily's figures he is taking Elliot "by the hand" on the way to streamlining the company.

"Through the use of the computer Shawn is showing us how each game and location is doing by percentage, and is helping us to decide whether or not particular games or locations are worthy of keeping."

Toronto Coin's operating route is mainly in Bowleramas, taverns, and billiard halls. According to Elliot, "Taito's Chase H.Q. has been spectacular, and also Data East's Robocop is bringing in top dollars. As well, Grayhound Pokers are very solid and reliable, and with their wide selections, are very popular in the bars."

As for the pay-out-style pokers, Elliot says that these are giving the industry a bad name, but well-established operators aren't touching them.

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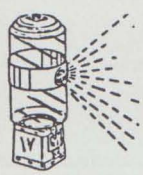

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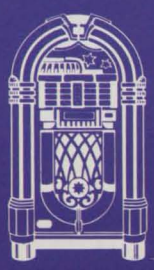

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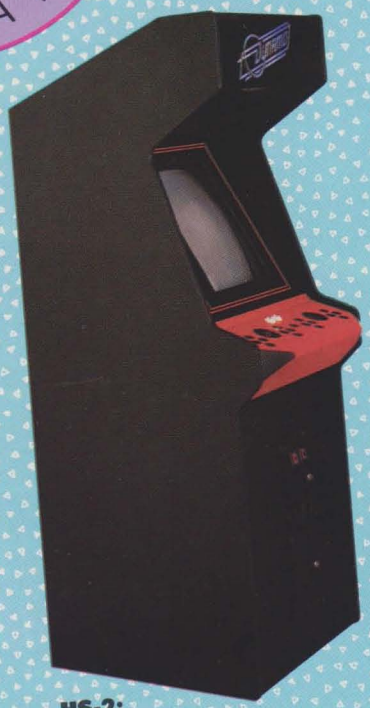

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